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THE SMART SET

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A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

Vol. XXV

MAY, 1908

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Bismarck

HOW many living men can squarely stand up and honestly compare themselves as the equal or superior (in any way whatsoever) to the great Iron Chancellor of the Hohenzollern's, who made Goethe's dream of Germanic unity a realistic drama of "iron and of blood?"

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THE MILLS OF THE GODS*

By Elizabeth Robins

I

HIS real name was Renzo Bellucci, but his intimates in Italy and elsewhere had called him Sata-nuccio ever since a wild escapade of his at the age of eighteen. This adventure, which consisted in his eloping with the three weeks' bride of the *Sindico* of Naples, fell later into the category of pardonable failings. For as the years went on Count Renzo Bellucci succeeded in building up a reputation for being the most lawless of a race old in lawlessness. Even his immediate forefathers had lived like predatory feudal barons in their remote palace in the Lombard Alps—riding rough-shod over the simple peasantry, and with an airy impunity breaking every inconvenient law, social as well as moral. It was said of these Bellucci that if some outraged neighbor summoned courage for remonstrance and threatened to invoke "the Law," the Bellucci of the years gone by would smile and echo, "'The Law'? In the mountains of the Bellucci—I am the law." And the worst of it was that this had been no idle boast.

But times were changed. No one out of Italy seemed to know whether this present Count Bellucci had in his youth emulated his ancestors' deeds of actual violence, or whether he had merely carried to unusual lengths the more refined vices of his own time. Certain it was he had not set foot on his native soil for twenty years—it was whispered that he dared not.

This was perhaps small deprivation to a man who divided his time between Paris, Vienna, Monte Carlo, and two

or three favored watering-places. But even the spending of a mysterious revenue with princely generosity, even laying waste the lives of many fair and noble ladies—came at last to pall on the Italian. It was borne in upon him that he had lived long enough in the mad whirl and—chill reminder—there was a touch of frost on his temples. He could, of course, have disguised the fact, but he had too true an estimate of the greater distinction lent to his almost unpardonably perfect face by the grace of a little silver softening the blue-black of his hair. Still, although he knew that for the time being it lent him an even subtler fascination, he accepted the warning and fell to thinking how he would spend his later years. He had always intended to marry—some day. The day had arrived . . . but the wife? Clearly she must not be one of the type he knew too well already. The laborious vivacity of the average smart woman was beginning to be to him a mortal weariness—another significant symptom! In any case, to marry one of them . . . He shuddered. It would be like marrying a brass band.

He was driving in the Engadine the following Summer—not the first time, for he was a famous whip. But for this occasion Monsieur Binder of Paris had turned out a new and marvelous coach after Bellucci's own design. The luxurious inside, or, to speak by the card, the insides, were a miracle of ingenious devices for supplying all the comforts of home. From without all the world might see the admirable proportions and perfect finish of this dark green miracle of elegance, with

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May, 1908—1

its touches of bright scarlet, its four gray horses with scarlet trappings, its liveried servants behind and jaunty groom on the box, with the long coach-horn shining like new gold and sending troops of triumphal echoes flying into the mountains. Certainly there was no gayer spectacle than Summer in all the gay playground of Europe than Count Bellucci in Tyrolese-green, driving this flashing equipage along the blinding white roads of the Engadine.

He had stopped at Sûs for *déjeuner*, and stood waiting for the horses at the door of the Schweizerhof, finishing his cigarette and laughing idly at a passage-at-arms between the two ladies of his party who, each in turn, appealed to him—apparently for championship, in reality for a vast deal more. Suddenly, in a great cloud of dust, with a jingling of harness and bells, the diligence from Davos drove up to the door. Count Bellucci's attention wandered from his vivacious guests as he watched the usual sunburnt contingent climbing down with cramped eagerness to storm the café of the Schweizerhof. They were all as white as millers from the pervading dust—all but two. These ladies wore dust cloaks of silver-gray silk, white Panama hats and white lace veils. The cloaks and veils, removed in the hall, revealed two people guiltless of travel stains, the handsome mother of a still more strangely beautiful girl. Girl? She might be twenty-six, mused Bellucci—but by all the gods, what a face!

With the instinct of his kind, he had not noticed the older woman particularly till she turned to say to her daughter, "Don't be so slow, child; all the tables will be taken." He stared, then contracted his black brows and after a second's hesitation went forward.

"How do you do? Do you remember me after all this time?"

The woman started slightly, then seemed from her deliberate look of well-bred coldness about to deny the acquaintance—reconsidered, and bowed without noticing his offered hand.

"You are clever to recognize me

after so many years," she said. "Is this the way to the coffee-room?"

"No; permit me." He led the way. His gourmet guest, the Duc de Boutray, was still waiting and fuming at a far table for a final "special" dish that seemed never to be coming.

"Will you sit over there?"

"No," said the lady, looking about, "we will have a table to ourselves."

"But there is none."

"They will bring one."

Bellucci intercepted a breathless waitress with her hands full of dishes. *Nein, nein*, there were no more tables to be had, but there was plenty of room at the others. This way—she would show madame. The lady said a few low words to her. The girl opened her eyes and agreed instantly that a small table should be brought from some other room. But the *Gnädige Frau* must have the kindness to wait a little. Oh, yes, she would wait. She leaned against the wall, observing covertly Bellucci's momentary silent absorption in her daughter. Never in all his commerce with beautiful women, never in all his days, had he seen a face that stirred him as this one did. The only things English about her were her figure and her serenity, "incredibly proud," he called it, others said supremely indifferent. For the rest, this daughter of a typical Englishwoman looked an Italian of the Italians save for her milk-white skin. The nobility of her outlines was purely Latin, he said to himself, the thin, straight nose, the fine, clean curve of the jaw that is rarest of all rare things in England, the delicate chiseling of lips and chin, and above all the eyes! Ah! said Bellucci to himself, those eyes look straight out of Italy. And an obscure sense of homesickness possessed him. But how—how—how had it happened—how . . . and behind his surface curiosity touching the mother ran deep and eager the thought, "How should I make those lamps of Italy to shine on me?"

"Don't let us keep you," said the elder woman drily.

"I must wait and see you established—your daughter?"

"Oh, quite unnecessary for you to wait." She looked about as if in search of something.

"But it will be a pleasure," replied Bellucci suavely. "Won't you present me to your daughter?"

"I thought so—they are smoking in here!" exclaimed the lady. "I will see if we cannot get a private room."

Her roving, restless eyes settled upon her companion with a straight, keen look that had the air of accompanying a command. The girl turned away, walked to the window and stood looking out.

"A private room is impossible," said Bellucci. "I tried my best to get one. The place is overflowing."

"Ah!" the mother leaned back once more against the wall. Bellucci forced himself to look away from the girl, and, directing the most gravely-sweet of all his arsenal of dangerous glances upon the woman at his side, he said under his breath:

"To think of our meeting like this!"

"To think of our meeting at all!" she replied with a quietness that seemed bought at a price.

"Why do you say that? I have always hoped . . . I have never felt that the past was dead."

"That consolation has also been denied to me."

"How bitter women are over the chances of life."

"Today I am not bitter."

"No?"

"No. Bitterness is impotence."

"And today you . . . you . . ." he scrutinized her narrowly.

"Today I remember. That swallows up mere bitterness."

He bowed slightly with a tinge of mockery.

"You perplex me a little, just as you used to. But your good memory is a compliment to the—to our past."

The woman set her thin lips in a hard line.

A little table was being carried in by the obliging waitress, and the lady, after nodding her approval across the room to the sturdy *Mädchen*, turned to Bellucci and bowed.

"Good-bye."

"I shall see you again."

"Scarcely; you go as usual to St. Moritz?"

"Oh! I go where I like. I never make plans. And you—?"

"I . . . oh, I go to luncheon." She moved away. He kept at her side.

"I don't even know your name."

She flashed a look at him over her shoulder, and quite low she said:

"But I know yours, Satanuccio. Good-bye."

He turned a dull red, as if she had struck him across the face, and went down the long dining-room with anguished eyes. It did not escape him that she waited until he reached the door before calling her daughter to re-join her.

After a talk outside with the driver of the diligence, Bellucci announced to his guests that he had just been hearing that the weather at St. Moritz was atrocious. Why not go to Tarasp for a few days? It would prolong their outing a little, but . . . As usual he encountered no opposition to his plans.

That same evening, making his way along the veranda that runs round two sides of the Waldhaus at Tarasp, he scanned with eager eyes the people dining at the double row of tables. In vain the head waiter kept bowing at his elbow, saying that he had reserved a special table inside for Monsieur le Comte, "by the window with the finest view." The look of anxious scrutiny in Bellucci's face suddenly cleared as he caught sight of two ladies at the far end of the Galerie du Nord.

"*Inside!*" he turned suddenly upon the waiter. "You don't suppose I dine at the table d'hôte!"

"There is a special dining-room, Monsieur le Comte, for dining apart."

But Bellucci was deaf—all his being seemed to be concentrated in the gleaming eyes as he made his way to an empty table, next but one to the ladies he was looking for. He was sure the elder one saw him, for she had turned round as he approached. Whether magnetized by the insistence of his glance, or making the motion merely by chance, she gave no further sign of recognition. The

waiter was still murmuring obsequiously when the Italian cut him short: "Don't you know people come here for the air? We will dine here." He stopped by an empty table.

"But, Monsieur le Comte—"

"Bring me the menu."

"But that table is taken, monsieur."

"I know, I have taken it. Wine-list!" A little Frenchwoman bustled past, stopping to greet Bellucci.

"Fancy meeting people one knows in this out-of-the-way place. I've just caught sight of Madame Paravicini." She bustled on and greeted with effusion the travelers from Davos. Bellucci made as if only that moment had he recognized the neighbor with her back to him.

He rose and followed the Frenchwoman. "How do you do again, Madame Paravicini?" he said. "Mademoiselle," he bowed.

The girl was dressed in white and wore no ornament but a long chain wrought to look like a thin golden rope, from which hung a somewhat insignificant "St. George and the Dragon" in enamel. Delicate as was the workmanship of the chain, it was too heavy for such a pendant.

The stream of talk ran so swiftly between the two elder women that Bellucci was at leisure to stand and look at the girl. So far from blushing or even averting her eyes, she seemed unconscious of his fascinated scrutiny. Calmly as any saint looks out of a chapel window she gazed across the wooded valley of the inn, toward the high-perched hamlet of Fettau.

Presently the voluble flow paused an instant.

"And this is your daughter!" exclaimed Madame la Baronne Sauvan. "I am delighted to see you at last!" and with a Frenchwoman's tact she covered the girl's lack of response by taking her passive hand and pressing it warmly. "I am glad to see you coming out of your seclusion. A young girl and—may I say?—one so beautiful, ought not to live the life of a *religieuse*," she nodded and smiled. "After dinner!" she added by way of adieu, and

Bellucci walked back with her to her table.

"I understand," she whispered, "people say in London that Madame Paravicini staves off the rivalry of a beautiful daughter longer than any woman ever did before. That girl is twenty-six or twenty-seven. But I don't understand it myself. Madame Paravicini has lived mostly in the country since her husband died. You know she's fabulously rich. But it's quite true that exquisite girl has never had a London season! Some women are so selfish."

"Who was Paravicini—one of the Genoese?"

"Yes, younger branch. He wasn't much. Everybody wondered why she married him. But he was very good-looking—your type." And she laughed coquettishly up into the dark face. Bellucci bowed and went back to his own party, just assembled. He was vaguely annoyed at their immediate discovery of, and comment upon, his friends from Davos. He had roused the curiosity of his guests at Sûs by refusing to say who the ladies were, and he damned his evil luck in not having earlier known their name. He supplied the omission now carelessly enough, but it was too late. His unusual reticence, as they thought it, had cast a cloak of mystery about the two women. All through dinner the talk ran upon the girl. She was the most flawless beauty of the age, the Duc de Boutray declared, and why was it that all the world wasn't raving about her? Bellucci observed with pleasure that although everyone in that particular corner of the world was staring and speculating, the girl's own eyes left the table before her only to rest, with serenity unparalleled, on the far-off white tower of the Convent of Fettau.

"They have never spoken to each other all through dinner," whispered the Duc de Boutray, as the two ladies rose. Without looking right or left they made their way indoors.

Neither Madame la Baronne nor anyone else saw the Paravicinis after dinner.

"And they never once spoke to each other," was the remark of more than one.

II

For four days Madame Paravicini had successfully foiled all attempts at friendliness on the part of her acquaintances. Although both she and her daughter drank the waters, they did not join the fashionable horde down at the Trinkhalle of the Kurhaus in the early morning. They had the waters brought up to them, and walked about the deserted Waldhaus grounds "between glasses."

On the fourth day one of the curious, who stayed behind to observe, reported that they threaded their way up and down the deserted paths in a silence so absolute that it bordered on the uncanny. People began to whisper, "The girl is deaf and dumb!" When the rumor reached Bellucci he turned white; his circumspection suddenly failed him. He had driven his party that day round by Ardetz and Guarda to Fettau. When almost home again his keen eyes caught sight of Madame Paravicini and her daughter just getting in from a walk. As they reached the door of the Waldhaus Madame Paravicini turned suddenly, hearing the sound of the coach-horn. Bellucci brought his four superb horses up with a magnificent sweep and flourish, stopping them suddenly on their very haunches at the door of the great entrance. The girl gazed at the brilliant apparition with large-eyed wonder.

"Come," said Madame Paravicini. Her daughter seemed not to hear. But Bellucci noticed with secret satisfaction as he jumped off the box, the first sign of interest the marvelous face had worn. It was true she looked not at the driver, but at the foam-flecked mouths of the horses, and the long scarlet tassels that waved so proudly down their splendid broad chests.

"Come, Alicia," repeated Madame Paravicini, and still the girl never moved. An acquaintance of Bellucci, who left the group at the door to com-

pliment the count on his horsemanship, whispered the growing impression:

"Think of that superb creature there being deaf and dumb!"

Bellucci looked up sharply, white to the lips. Madame Paravicini had laid her hand on the girl's arm and was drawing her indoors. A lady's glove lay on the step. Bellucci sprang after them just as they entered the hall.

"You dropped this, mademoiselle," he said close to the girl's ear. She turned at once and slowly shook her head.

Bellucci watched them till they disappeared up the broad staircase.

"She's *not* deaf!" he said triumphantly to his friends.

"Did she answer you?"

"No, but she heard me, and I spoke low."

By dinner-time another theory was generally accepted. The beautiful *Anglaise* had some fatal and hideous impediment in her speech. Bellucci's heart sank again. How could he be sure the rest were wrong? There was something strange about those long dinners and those longer walks, unbroken, so far as anyone could tell, by a single syllable of speech—it was more than strange, it was inhuman. Why did the mother not talk to her in signs? Was she so proud, or was the girl—that they preferred to accept dumbly the fiat of fate and wrap themselves in silence? But it wasn't true. He threw off the supposition like an evil dream. For he had recognized by this time that the girl meant something to him of allurements—promised something—(aside from being the daughter of an enemy) something of mysterious difficulty in attainment new even in his varied history.

He fastened his gaze on her that night at dinner, wondering, beseeching, imperious. Presently, to his joy and astonishment, she turned her great liquid eyes full upon him, seemed to shiver slightly in the cool evening air, and drew a little white lace mantle round her. He turned away an instant to disguise his triumph. When he looked again the great eyes were

still upon him. A fresh course was being served at the moment. Madame Paravicini leaned forward and whispered something. The girl, without opening her lips, got up and changed seats with her mother. Her back was turned to Bellucci's party, so that instead of a new love's mysterious beauty Madame Paravicini's cold but open scorn confronted her ancient enemy.

Bellucci shook himself free of his friends about nine o'clock that night. He scribbled a few words on a card, sent it up to Madame Paravicini's sitting-room, and waited over half-an-hour thereafter, fearing and fuming in his own apartments. At last a verbal message:

"Madame Paravicini is tired, but she will see you for a few minutes."

He found her alone, half reclining on a *chaise longue* in the loggia opening out of her sitting-room. She did not rise, she did not notice his hand.

"Sit down," she said.

For the first time in his life Bellucci fell upon silence. At last, he began desperately, with something like a shak in his voice:

"Sophie . . . Madame Paravicini, I've come to ask you, to *beg* you to be friends."

She might have been dead, for all response.

"Or, if not friends just yet, at least treat me like an acquaintance—like, devil take it! like a human being!"

She made a slight movement where she lay in the shadow.

"Your demands are at least more moderate than they used to be, Satanuccio. It is so with us all as we grow old."

He disregarded the sneer.

"You agree then . . . you will let me see something of you?"

"Of *me*?"

"Yes, of you . . . and of your daughter," he said with the genius of audacity.

"You make a strange request."

"Why? See, I am frank. Your daughter is young, she is strangely beautiful." He leaned forward out of the light from the inner room, trying

to pierce the gloom shrouding the woman in the corner of the loggia.

"For the moment I was thinking of myself—odd as it may seem."

"N-not at all," he stammered.

"Such a request addressed from you to me is surely 'strange,' as I said, and—even for you, Satanuccio, it strikes me as—"

"Well, as what?"

"As daring."

He moved uneasily in his chair.

"Don't you know," she went on in a low, even voice, "that I am that woman in the world who most owes you hatred?"

"No!"

"Oh, yes . . . and there are not a few of us about the world."

He was bursting in upon her, but she silenced him.

"Remember," and a white hand was lifted in shadowy warning out of the dim corner, "remember I owe you more than all."

For the second time in her presence he, the adroit, the voluble, was stricken with silence.

"I have been sitting here," she went on, "thinking about you for half-an-hour"—she laughed a little laugh of self-scorn—"for half my life might be nearer the mark; but in this half-hour here, I have decided to let you renew the old acquaintance . . ." she paused an instant . . . "if you dare."

He smiled to himself over the incorrigible vanity, the pathetic constancy of woman. For all his audacious frankness she still thought of herself as "dangerous." He sneered covertly:

"I accept the risk in all humility."

"Then go now," she said, "and you may dine with us here, if you will, tomorrow. We shall not go down to the veranda again. The evenings are growing cold."

Punctually at eight the next evening Bellucci presented himself at the door of Madame Paravicini's sitting-room. He found her and her daughter looking over some views. They were in evening dress for the first time since coming to the Waldhaus, and even the

mother looked brilliant. The girl—he caught his breath as he looked at the girl! The dazzling whiteness of her neck and arms was set off by a ravishing ing gown of coral tulle. In the masses of her hair two of the great rich carnations of the Engadine shone and glowed. She bowed gravely upon the introduction, and Bellucci's dread revived as he noticed that the beautiful, firm curve of her lips never once relaxed for the utterance of word or even sound. The conversation during the dinner went on a little lamely between him and his hostess. Bellucci's spirits sank lower every time that the girl, to his tentative passing of salt or offer to fill her water-glass, replied by a little bend, or a smiling shake of the beautiful head, instead of a yea or a nay. She had an Italian expressiveness of gesture with her slim white hands, and had it not been for the horrible fear that haunted him, Bellucci would not have missed the sound of her voice, so eloquent is beauty, so soul-satisfying. But as it was, alternately her loveliness lifted him up upon dizzy peaks of delight or desire, whence her immutable silence dragged him down.

Never had he spent an evening of such vicissitudes of feeling. Faint with weariness, sick with disappointment, he rose at ten o'clock, saying with apparent reluctance but very real relief, that no later hour for going to bed was accounted *Kurgemäss*. He said au revoir to Madame Paravicini, and with a secret tremor held out his hand in turn to the radiant being by her side.

"Won't you bid me good night?" he asked, and something of the sharpness of strained foreboding crept into the melodious Southern voice. There was a little pause, and then:

"Good night," she said, with the adorable air of a good child saying its lesson.

Bellucci's heart gave a great leap, and before the cold eyes of the mother he had the effrontery to stoop and kiss the girl's slim white hand.

"Good night, good night," sang in his ears all the dark hours—a sweeter

note of promise than had ever sounded for him before. No caress, he told himself, had ever been half so blinding sweet as that reluctant, grave but magic-working word, "Good night."

Three days later Bellucci begged his guests to pardon another evening's absence. The next morning one of the ladies of his party inflicted a stormy scene upon him, and shook the dust of Tarasp from off her feet.

The remaining lady, to her own great exasperation, was forced for "foolish reasons of conventionality" to follow the irate one's example. Bellucci, to his joy, was as good as alone, for the Duc de Boutray had found diversion in Madame la Baronne Sauvan. Everyone at Vulpera—everyone at Tarasp and even as far as Schulz—knew that the driver of the smart coach, the famous Count Renzo Bellucci, was infatuated by the English beauty at the Waldhaus, and one and all they speculated upon the result.

Certain it was that Bellucci alone had been able to overcome, to some extent, the icy aloofness of the mother. Ah, yes, the old story. Bellucci was irresistible. Men chaffed in public, and in private some of them sighed. But one and all they wanted to know if the girl ever talked, and what did she say? When Bellucci smiled and shook his head they pretended still to believe in that old legend of her dumbness, or else a hideous and embarrassing impediment in her speech. But Bellucci could laugh at all that now. To be sure, she had said little, very little. She was no chatterer, thank God! A peerless creature like that could afford to leave the meaner arts of conversation, and of smiles, to her poorer sisters. Was it not her beautiful quietness that first of all had cast a spell upon him, worn out with the restless tricks of other women—social acrobats, he called them in his contempt. It was impossible to conceive Alicia Paravicini condescending to vivacity. She would have the air, even in a crowded drawing-room, of being alone in some enchanted spot sacred to beauty and to silence. All the same, he *would* have

liked her to speak in more than monosyllables; and he would above all have liked to see her oftener—more intimately.

But the truth was that Madame Paravicini was very chary of her favors. Sometimes for three or four days Bellucci had only distant glimpses of the pair, as they came in and out from driving or from mass. Once only did he follow them into the primitive little chapel. Madame Paravicini looked at him with a chill disdain that made him regret his enterprise. But he saw his young goddess telling her beads with rapt devotion, and was vaguely glad to be assured that she had been brought up a Catholic. He had never cared to know what Madame Paravicini's or any other woman's faith was—but his wife should be a Catholic. It stood in his mind for a great deal more than orthodoxy; it comported better with his requirements, his ideals; it was more fitting, more feminine than Protestantism. He looked at the rosary slipping slowly through the slim fingers, and told himself such prayers should be registered upon a thing of greater beauty than a string of carved wooden beads. With which mental note he slipped out of the chapel to avoid meeting again the eyes of Madame Paravicini. He was afraid of nothing so much as of driving his advantage to the breaking-point. Warily, as he thought, he bided his time. But his sensitive vanity could not brook that others should know how little, in reality, he saw of the Paravicinis. Many an evening when he was supposed to be with them he was pacing his own apartments, or smoking in the friendly, fragrant darkness of his own loggia, "biding his time."

Some of his leisure hours he employed in superintending at the local jeweler's the making of a reliquary in the form of a heavy heart of gold. He lamented the commonness of the design, but—a country jeweler! When at last it was finished he laid inside it an antique rosary of great value, and waited impatiently for the blessed moment when he should give the im-

memorial emblem to the girl, and ask if he might hope that some day she would give him in return that heart of more than gold, yea, than of much fine gold—the heart he coveted above all things of price.

But the days went by and Madame Paravicini seemed to have determined to revoke her decision and withdraw her acquaintance. The regulation three weeks' cure lacked only forty-eight hours of being completed, and no one ever stayed longer. For six weary days Bellucci had not come to speech with Madame Paravicini nor seen the girl save in their always hurried passing. In despair he sent a note, begging Madame Paravicini to see him that evening. She replied that she was fatigued and must decline. He then sat down and wrote her an adroit epistle, full of respectful courtesy, admiration even, asking if she would consider his becoming a suitor for the hand of her daughter. The answer ran in all the brevity of four words:

Come tomorrow at four.

III

WHEN Bellucci appeared on the following afternoon at the threshold of Madame Paravicini's sitting-room he found her standing by a table in the middle of the apartment, with much more of expectancy, more even of subdued excitement, than he had anticipated. What had before often passed through his mind became a fixed certainty: "She is going to revenge herself! She is going to punish me at this last moment by showing me all that her enmity will cost me." Well, he would make a good fight for it. He came in and greeted her quietly.

"Do you mind closing the door?"

He did so, and she pointed to a chair, but, as she still stood, he simply leaned on the back of his and looked at her, full of fresh foreboding which he strove to hide. At last:

"You have not kept your promise," he said, feeling his way. "You shut me out for six mortal days!"

"I have not been well. The place has not agreed with me."

"Then why have you stayed?" he asked suspiciously.

"It seemed to suit Alicia—so I've stayed on for her sake."

"You are very fond of her!" he said, feeling anew all the crazy hopelessness of his errand. She took no notice of his exclamation.

"Will you continue 'to stay on' for her sake?"

"No; my doctor orders me to St. Moritz."

"When?"

"We go tomorrow."

"Will you let me drive you there?"

She shook her head.

"Thank you. We have already made arrangements."

He threw down his hat, walked a few paces to the loggia and back again.

"Then you have sent for me only to—?"

"You mistake. I never sent for you."

"I beg your pardon! I made a formal proposal for the hand of your daughter—you give me twenty-four hours' hope, and write me I am to come to you today only to be told—" he ended with an inarticulate sound of anger.

"To be told what?"

"Some version, I suppose, of 'all our arrangements are made.' Oh, I understand it well enough. I was stark mad to hope for a single moment." He stopped in the middle of the room opposite her and, with gleaming, narrowed eyes, he said:

"Of course! This is your hour."

"No," she said, "*this* is not my hour."

They stood facing each other a few seconds and then he burst out:

"For the love of heaven—tell me what you mean to do!"

She left the table and sat down looking straight before her, almost like one in a trance. Presently he flung up his hands with a gesture of despair.

"I don't know in what mood of madness I came to you. I know still less why I've stayed. But I cannot endure it an instant longer. Will you or will

you not give me your daughter for my wife?"

"I should not have thought even *you*, Satanuccio, would need to be told that rather than give a child of mine to you I would kill her with my own hands."

"Then why," he said, white with fury, "why in the name of the Mother of God did you not say as much last night?"

"Because Alicia is not my child."

"Not your—whose child is she?"

"Paravicini's."

Bellucci drew a long breath.

"Then you do not mean to oppose my suit?"

"That Alicia is not my daughter makes it less easy for me absolutely to refuse . . ."

"Yes, yes." He wondered vaguely at the incorrigible conscientiousness of the English mind. "I shall be able to make good settlements," he said, to strengthen her intention of acting for the good of the girl.

Madame Paravicini nodded.

"Alicia has a fortune of her own."

"Then if you no longer stand in my way, why not be generous and help me?"

"How?"

"Let me have the opportunity afforded by the drive to St. Moritz. Let me take you."

She shook her head.

"No; even though she is not my daughter, I think jealously of our hours alone, especially if they're coming to an end. Besides, Alicia is very reserved—very shy. You have to remember she has shared the life of a recluse—*my* life. I may tell you, since you bid me be generous"—she smiled oddly—"I may tell you, you will be wise to make haste slowly."

"Very well. I bow to your decision."

They sat silent for a few moments.

Then the woman said suddenly:

"When should you want to take her away from me—supposing Alicia listens to you?" Something indefinable in her manner, something not sad, not even in the least regretful, gave Bellucci pause. A formless suspicion fell upon him as he thought how invariably it

liked her to speak in more than monosyllables; and he would above all have liked to see her oftener—more intimately.

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was held to be a man's affair to ask—to urge the marriage day.

"I should like to consult Alicia," he said guardedly. "I would not dream—especially after what you have said—of hurrying, of frightening her. She must come to know me."

Madame Paravicini rose nervously, as though to force the conference to a close.

"I am glad to find you so reasonable," she said, with ironic intonation. "You will not mind, then, if Alicia and I continue our journey after a short stay at St. Moritz."

"Your journey where?"

"Did you not know? We are on our way to Italy."

Bellucci maintained a face absolutely guiltless of expression.

"Yes, I have promised for years to show Alicia her father's country. She has wanted all her life to go to the South. Poor child! She loves Italy"—Madame Paravicini's eyes fell on Bellucci—"she loves Italy as exiles do."

He saw the girl fading out of his reach. That wall, not to be scaled by him, was rising up between them, icy, impassable, peak on peak—the mighty Alps! For a moment his self-command deserted him.

"You won't take her out of my reach!" he cried.

"Oh, no!" said the woman, smiling; "only to Italy."

"Devil!" he said in his heart. "She means to play me false, after all." Then aloud:

"How long will you be in St. Moritz?"

"Several days, I should say," she answered indifferently, "unless the Maloja wind is blowing."

"Then why not turn your back to the Foehn and go to Lucerne or—?"

"Because I must go to Italy. I will be frank. Not only on account of Alicia's strong desire, but for private reasons I must be in Genoa in a fortnight."

"In a fortnight?" The feeling of having to think against time gave him a sensation of physical breathlessness. "A fortnight! Have you any idea

what is her state of mind in regard to me?"

"She likes you."

"Has she ever liked anyone more?"

"No."

"Then she must—you might as well tell me—she must have begun caring for me?"

"Your logic is irresistible." Madame Paravicini smiled. "But as I warned you, she is shy. She will admit things to me—she will do things for me, that she will do for no one else."

"You have great influence over her?"

"Naturally."

"Would she marry me if you told her to?"

"Yes!" the monosyllable rang disagreeably harsh. "But you don't imagine I would try to coerce her?"

"No! no! Of course not. Still, your influence and—" Suddenly he dropped his deferential air and eyed her with undisguised suspicion, "If you are playing fair, you will give me every opportunity to induce Alicia not to accompany you to Italy."

"I might do that and still leave you far from your desire. Also, I might do better than that."

"I am well aware of it. Instead of being neutral you might . . . Why shouldn't the marriage take place in a fortnight or so, if you used your influence in my favor?"

"Why should I be at pains to serve you—you, of all men on the face of the earth?"

"Why shouldn't you—for Alicia's sake? Ought you, *can* you stand between her and happiness? For though you may smile and though you may sneer, I *shall* make her happy!" he said in hot-headed fashion.

"I shall not prevent you from trying."

"You promise?"

"I promise. But—"

"Yes?"

"Walk warily. Although I make no pretense of being friendly to you, you will do well to remember my warning. You will have in Alicia to deal with a nature you are little fitted to understand."

"I will learn."

"Then you must be content to learn slowly. She is not like—the women you have known best." Bellucci turned away his eyes. "You will find her less generous, more self-contained, one who will better guard that dearest of women's possessions—"

Bellucci moved restively.

"—her mystery," added Madame Paravicini, to his surprise.

He opened his eyes like one relieved from the fear of moral commonplaces.

"I had not realized *that* was the name of the dearest possession."

"How should you? The world, too, gives it another name."

"At all events, in this case," he hastened to say, "I cannot go wrong, for I shall not move a step without your guidance, madame. And although I do not expect you to believe it, if you bring me to my goal, or if you allow me to reach it, the future shall show my gratitude."

Bellucci started for St. Moritz four hours before the Paravicinis, but he reached there half an hour later, having rested his horses at Zernetz.

As he dashed down from the Dorf into the Bad about seven o'clock in the evening all St. Moritz stopped to stare. Up on the high piazza of the Hôtel du Lac Bellucci saw, with a sense of reassurance, Madame Paravicini and her daughter waiting to assist at his triumphal entry.

That night he drew from the elder woman the admission that she had taken the opportunity during their long drive to speak of him and to say the preparatory word.

"I said very little—I thought it to your interest."

"Then may I—?" he looked longingly across the private sitting-room to where the girl sat languidly laying the patience-cards.

"I wouldn't say anything tonight; she is tired by the long drive."

"Might I not give her a little souvenir of Tarasp?"

"Oh . . . yes."

He went over, and, with a pretty

speech, presented to her the golden heart, showed her it was a reliquary, and how within was the rosary blessed by Pope Paul in the sixteenth century.

Alicia's smile seemed to open the gates of paradise, her soft "Thank you" was such guerdon as he felt men might have died for.

"And if you accept mine, will you not give me yours in return?"

She looked at him inquiringly.

"Ah, say that you will give me your heart?"

"My heart," she answered like a mountain echo—but with the grave, dim smile—it meant to him a maid's consenting.

The next day Madame Paravicini reported that Alicia had no objection to offer to the plan of a marriage in St. Moritz. Bellucci did not disguise his desire to fly to her at once and tell her of his rapture.

"She has a headache this morning," said Madame Paravicini. "I have advised her to keep quiet. Why not write to her?"

"I will, of course."

So he poured his soul upon paper and was well rewarded by Alicia's brief but charming answer, written in a curious, unformed hand. He began, however, after his next day's short and unsatisfactory visit, to chafe at the absurd barriers of conventionality set up between the lovers by Madame Paravicini. Never for an instant did she leave them alone. It was awkward for a man of Bellucci's reputation to protest, above all to Madame Paravicini! She not only absorbed the conversation when the three did meet, but she frequently put words into the mouth of the girl, who spoke them with a phonographic obedience. It several times crossed Bellucci's mind that the girl was afraid of her. On the rare occasions when he addressed some direct question to Alicia, to see her beautiful eyes seeking Madame Paravicini's for permission to reply, and for a hint of how, strengthened him in his suspicion. Her marriage day would be her day of deliverance, and it could not come too soon.

"I am sure Alicia likes coaching," he said to Madame Paravicini on that third evening at St. Moritz, as he was bidding her good night.

"What makes you think so?"

"Would there be anything odd in her telling me so much?"

"I had not observed her doing so."

"Ah, but haven't you seen it in her face?—I have. Let us go to Maloja tomorrow."

Madame Paravicini shook her head.

"We have decided to do an excursion by ourselves tomorrow to Alp Grum."

Bellucci tried to master his disappointment and to mask his anger.

"I am disappointed," he said, "that you—that Alicia, after agreeing to so much should not let me see her oftener."

"A woman who marries at a fortnight's notice has much to do."

"To go to Alp Grum, for instance."

Madame Paravicini turned away.

"I tell you," he began hotly; and then, as often happened, he caught himself back from the pitfall of impetuosity, conscious that whether or not it was essential to "walk warily" in Alicia's sight, he must at all events make shift to do so before the enigmatic eyes of "the mother." If he had not been blinded, absorbed in the girl, he would have formulated to himself the vague feeling that Madame Paravicini's behavior, and her point of view, completely baffled him. But considering her not at all, he was little concerned to fathom the intricacies of her character. He would keep to the windward of her caprice till after he had got his will; and then good-bye again, and this time forever, to Madame Paravicini!

Two days later, while giving some directions to a servant, Madame Paravicini did not fail to notice that Bellucci employed the time in carrying on a hurried conversation in an undertone with Alicia.

"She confesses," said Bellucci gaily, when the servant had gone, "that she would like to be driven to Maloja. What do you say, Madame Paravicini?"

"If Alicia likes," she said indifferently.

"You would—wouldn't you?" he repeated to the girl.

"Yes," she said, smiling.

"I've been telling her," Bellucci pursued, partly to allay Madame Paravicini's suspicion if she had any as to his aside—partly to foster an interest in the expedition—"I've been telling Alicia about the castle there; do you know it—on the hill; above the head of the Silser See? My grandfather began to build a seat there and never finished it. You get a fine view."

"Oh, I don't mind giving up one day," she said with an indulgent air, "especially if it amuses Alicia. But you must not ask for another."

"You mean *before* the sixteenth."

She nodded.

"Of course I mean not another before the marriage—these long outings are very tiring, we find."

But Bellucci was supported by the thought of the opportunities offered by the morrow at Maloja, and by the nearness of the sixteenth. Blessed day! when he should be rid of the nightmare of Madame Paravicini's enigmatic presence—when he should be alone with Alicia!

IV

BELLUCCI'S coach stood before the Hôtel du Lac at eleven precisely. At a quarter-past the ladies were in their places; Bellucci sprang on the box and gathered up the long ribbons, one of the smart men in livery sounded the gleaming horn, and off dashed the four gray horses amid the admiring envy of the assembled crowd. Alicia, in her white-embroidered cloth, had never looked more adorable. But her supposed pleasure in coaching found little expression. If Bellucci realized this omission, a glance behind at the peerless face atoned a thousandfold. Such beauty as hers was answer to all questions, was guerdon for all imaginable service. He drove with merciless skill, pleased that Alicia showed no shrinking at the breakneck pace.

How like her it was, how worthy of her, to spare him the foolish shrieks and tremors of other women! Such manifestations had always annoyed him—he never realized before how much.

Through Camfer, along the chain of lakes by Silvaplana and by a détour through Sils Marie—back to the Inn side, and along the Silser See—lightly, swiftly, flew the gray horses in their scarlet trappings.

In less than two hours' time Bellucci pointed with his whip to a tower crowning the height above the lake.

"Look," he said, "that is Castellontano."

The girl leaned forward with clasped hands, murmuring softly,

"Castellontano."

"It is beautiful," said the mother.

"Beautiful," echoed the girl.

"It isn't really," said Bellucci depreciatingly. "It was never finished, as you will see. I'll take you over it after luncheon."

They had that meal at the Kursaal, the huge hotel at the head of the lake—just at the bottom of the castle-crested hill.

"Does no one live up there, in your *Schloss*?" asked Madame Paravicini in one of the pauses.

"I believe there are usually a couple of old servants about," answered Bellucci, "because sometimes an Austrian friend of my father's comes—or used to come—for a few weeks in the Summer. A queer old *Naturforscher*, who was a poet, I've been told, in the days of his youth. Alpine gardening was the hobby some years ago. The last time I saw him he was trying experiments on the rocks this side of the castle."

"Do you ever stay here yourself?" asked Madame Paravicini.

"Not I," he said with emphasis.

"Why not?"

"Wait till you see it."

On the way up the hill Bellucci stopped short.

"If he hasn't fenced in his garden! And from the look of the place I should say he was in residence." And Bellucci laughed.

They went on, opened a rustic gate,

and followed a little upward winding path among moss and heather-covered rocks. In a hundred nooks, planted in sheltered pockets of soil and screened by branches of trees stuck in the ground, were specimens of Alpine flora, every brave little plant bearing, like a banner, its high-sounding style and title on a label in the Latin tongue. Bellucci laughed again.

"Think of spending your time here doing that!" And he led the ladies on, up and down, till they came to the bridge where the path meets the Maloja road.

"Alicia," said Madame Paravicini, "that is the road to Italy."

"To Italy!" exclaimed the girl as who should say, "To paradise!" She stepped softly on the broad white highway, as one aware she walks on holy ground.

From a distance Castellontano appeared to be a compact edifice, consisting of two square stone towers of unequal height enclosing between them a parallelogram which had along its upper story a loggia open to the lake.

The unfinished building operations on the right of the great tower came well into view as they approached, restoring the largeness of the original design.

What was most remarkable about Castellontano, architecturally, was its foundation. The castle was upborne upon a mighty series of arches or short tunnels rising massively to a considerable height, out of the mother rock.

"It was daring," said Madame Paravicini, looking up and seeing how on all sides, save the one by which they came, the foundation walls sheered down steep to the valley, "yes, it was a daring thought to set a castle on this wild hill-top."

"More daring than you dream. It looks bold enough from this, but at the back—well, I don't care for it myself."

"What is it like?"

"Oh, you have a genial little view out of your drawing-room windows five hundred feet straight down a precipice. I've always thought it argued ill for my father's taste—his degree of culti-

vation—that he cared in piping times of peace to perch up here like a robber baron, in the very face of Nature's blackest scowl. It betokened a survival of the barbaric. But he repented, be it said to his credit—repented, abandoned more than half his plan, and fled. From this side"—Bellucci paused and looked back upon the lake—"nothing could be more charming. Don't you agree, Madame Paravicini?"

While he stood pointing out the mountain-peaks by name Alicia took the unusual initiative of following alone a little path to the left, just under the castle wall. Bellucci turned, suddenly missing her.

"My God!" he cried, "come back! Come back!"

The tall white figure stood motionless on the crest of the hill. Bellucci dashed forward, and laying his hands on her shoulders drew her back. Her eyes remained fixed, staring down. There was a little sign stuck on the hillside, and a lean black hand pointed downward, after the words *Val d'Enfer*.

"Alicia," he said soothingly; and she clung to him, but not as one who is alarmed. He was secretly thrilled by her confiding, yet unfrightened action.

"Come, my beautiful," he whispered as Madame Paravicini was seen approaching. "We will go inside." She smiled, and in that moment Renzo Bellucci tasted of content.

An old servant opened the door and gave his master blinking and uncertain greeting.

"Yes, yes, it's really I," exclaimed Bellucci. "No wonder you've almost forgotten me. Is Herr Stockau here?"

"Yes, signor."

"Well, you may show us about—all but his suite."

There were only two other rooms furnished, besides the occupied ones, and these were swathed in linen and covered with dust. But the decorations were good, and nothing seemed out of repair.

"I wonder you don't stay here, when you are in the Engadine."

"Yes, I wonder," said Alicia, with eyes shining.

"You don't mean you like it?"

"Oh, yes!" and it was said with more of conviction than any syllables he had ever heard her utter. He led the way to the great drawing-room facing the south. Alicia moved quickly to one of the windows.

"Oh!" she exclaimed softly, "oh!"

Her mother followed. Far away below them lay the valley, mountain-hemmed. Madame Paravicini leaned against the window-jamb as if glad of some solid support. The eye dropped down, with nothing to catch or to sustain the falling vision—down, down to the deep-lying Val Bregaglia. Alicia leaned out, with a half-smile illumining the calmness of her face.

"Come," said Bellucci, "we'll go to the tower."

It was here they found one of the furnished rooms, intended apparently for a ladies' boudoir, and with windows, two on each side, looking forth to the four quarters of the world.

"I believe this is the most charming of all," said Madame Paravicini.

"Yes," agreed Alicia.

Later they were looking at the view from the loggia.

"Where is Alicia?" said Bellucci suddenly; and he had hunted half over the castle before he found her in the boudoir leaning out of a window that looked toward Italy!

The thought stabbed at him—just for *him* it was impossible to gratify her long romantic dream. If it had been anything else in all the world!—and he fell to laying plans for entrapping her proud reserve into confession of other dreams and dearer longings, that he, in satisfying them, might conjure back the light in those lamps of Italy. For, true hedonist as he was, Bellucci was at times quite as ready as more generous men to brighten his own way by the reflected radiance of another's pleasure. Like a certain famous Florentine he would be capable on occasion of extending the affection he felt for himself to the members of his immediate family.

Coming back from their inspection of the place, they sat down for a while on a bench conveniently placed on a hil-

lock above the Alpine garden. Madame Paravicini began to speak of the arrangements for the wedding, and of her gratification that that great light among Roman prelates, Monsignor Bertarelli, would be in St. Moritz in time to officiate. Alicia, during the discussion of these details, got up and gathered several sprays of heather, which she fastened in her frock.

Presently Madame Paravicini glanced over her shoulder:

"Where is Alicia? I never knew her so restless as she is today. Alicia!" They went back toward the castle and there she was, standing under one of the great arches looking through into the Val Bregaglia.

It flashed over Bellucci that her interest might be, after all, chiefly in the place itself, rather than the land it looked out on—was it a pretty, shy little compliment to her future husband—a sign of romantic interest in his family and associations?

She turned round as she heard them coming. Her face dazzled him. He clean forgot his own dislike of the place—forgot the difficulty of making it habitable at short notice—forgot everything save the desire to prevent the new light from leaving the passionless beauty of Alicia's face.

"Would you like to stay here for a few weeks after we are married?" he said.

"Yes," she answered.

"Then we will."

In spite of the interest in and excitement about the event, participated in by all the gay world at St. Moritz, the wedding took place very quietly on the day arranged. Admission to the church was to be obtained by card only, and no card was ever more difficult to acquire.

After the ceremony and the signing of the register Madame Paravicini kissed Alicia and parted from her in the vestibule of the church. Standing back there in the shadow, she watched Bellucci lead out his bride through a dense crowd gathered at the door, and put her in the waiting coach.

Alicia's demeanor struck Bellucci as nothing short of perfection. He had seen ladies under this trying ordeal who wept and made their husbands ridiculous; ladies who giggled nervously and were facetious with their friends; ladies who grew red and awkward and tripped over their trains. Alicia passed through the gaping crowd as though she walked alone in a wood, noticing the people no more than if they had been rows of trees; yet wholly without hauteur, without the air of realizing that she inflicted any slight on her few acquaintances or showed any singular lack of the traditional bride's trepidation. And this piece of flawless perfection was his own! The hour of joy had struck. Madame Paravicini had faded into the Past. He was alone with Alicia and the future.

V

THEY had been married two weeks, and for two weeks they had been at Castellontano; but no eye had seen them outside the castle walls. The great Kursaal had given hospitality in that fortnight to many a party—from Pontresina, St. Moritz and neighboring places—parties made up for the sole purpose of catching a glimpse of the Count Bellucci and his bride. Shameless sightseers gathered of an afternoon on the Maloja road, hoping to encounter the pair walking or driving by.

But the only sign of life upon the castle hill to solace their curiosity was the occasional apparition of a grotesque-looking old man, whose back seemed well-nigh doubled with bending down to watch, through enormous magnifying-spectacles, the health of his Alpine nurslings. People who ventured to ask him about the newly married pair had stares for answer and a shake of the uncouth head. The one who got farthest with him elicited:

"I have my own apartments;" this followed by a grunt as much as to say, "I don't permit even my host to bother me."

At last the expeditions made with the

hope of encountering the Belluccis were abandoned, but tongues wagged the faster with wonder and surmise. Switzerland was fast emptying; in another week most of the hotels would close and the gay world be gathered elsewhere until the St. Moritz Winter season set in. The day before his departure from the Engadine the Duc de Boutray wrote to Bellucci, bantering him on the subject of his invisibility, and hoping he was not going to turn Bluebeard—but if not, why had he shut up his beautiful Fatima? And when might his friends hope for a glimpse of him? The letter closed with several bits of news, among them that Madame Paravicini's journey to Italy had been interrupted by a feverish attack at Thusis, where she was to remain till she was quite restored.

That very day the lingerers-on at the Kursaal were rewarded by seeing Count Bellucci pass by in a landau—alone. He wore his hat low over his eyes and sat rigid, with folded arms.

Strangely enough, he was traveling by extra post and without servants.

Arrived at Thusis, he stopped at the Via Mala Hotel, refused even to look at his rooms, demanded to be shown to Madame Paravicini's and, all travel-stained as he was, presented himself at her door. The man-servant who showed him up having knocked,

"You may go," said Bellucci. He himself waited only an instant, and knocked again. The maid appeared.

"Madame is not well; she does not see anyone."

"She will see me." And setting his shoulder to the door he pushed past her. The woman he was looking for lay on a sofa in the fading light, with her fingers between the pages of a closed book.

"Ah," she said quietly, "it is you."

"Yes, it is I," and he stood like one rooted, staring down upon her impassivity with burning eyes. The maid disappeared into the adjoining room and closed the communicating door.

"Would you not prefer to send her out of earshot?" he said.

Madame Paravicini made a motion

of indifference with her shoulders, and then called:

"Christine!"

"Madame!" she opened the door.

"You may go down now. I shall not need you till ten—till I ring."

The maid closed the hall-door behind her. They listened to her footfalls dying down the corridor. Bellucci threw down his hat.

"Tell me," he cried, "am I asleep or am I awake? Have I, for the last dozen days, been dreaming or—is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"Is Alicia—is she—?" His voice dropped, his courage seemed to fail him. "Is she like other women?"

"Surely you thought not—or why choose her from all the rest of the world?"

"Don't juggle with words," he said with haggard weariness, dropping into a chair. "I *have* to come to you; for no one else knows."

"You forget I have not seen Alicia since her marriage. I do not know what effect it has had on her."

"Then I will try to give you a faint idea," he said bitterly; "no words could convey the full horror of the truth. But I shall not leave you without knowing whether something has happened, something I cannot grasp, that suddenly has killed her soul; or whether—" He looked at the woman before him with a tigerish intensity as though he would tear out her heart.

"What has happened?" she asked quietly.

Bellucci leaped to his feet and paced the room. Suddenly stopping in front of her he said almost in a whisper:

"Part of the horror of it is its vagueness. There are times when I feel that it is not she who is so strange, but I. This much is certain: never since I took her from you at the church has she uttered to me, or to anyone, a single word, of her own accord."

"Ah," Madame Paravicini smiled ironically. "Your complaint against her is that she is not talkative. But you knew that."

Bellucci smothered an oath.

"But Alicia is always well-bred," Madame Paravicini went on calmly. "She will always answer you, when you speak to her—unless you speak rudely. A harsh word silences her."

"A harsh word! My God! or a kind one, or any word of any sort. At most I have got 'Thank you,' or echoed repetitions of what I myself have said."

"Surely an ideal characteristic in a wife, Satanuccio. She will never disagree with you."

"What I am here to know is, has she been like that with you? Or has some sudden shock or jar—women are so strange, such brittle creatures—" he murmured brokenly to himself, passing his hand across his brow. "But," he turned again upon the woman lying before him, "have you seen her in this mood?"

"I have not, I repeat, any knowledge of her 'after-marriage mood.'"

"Do you tell me you have had no experience of the nervous strain of being dumbly watched hour after hour—day in, day out—by those haunting eyes?"

"I found other occupation for those eyes. Has she given up her tapestry work?"

"God's pity, no! If ever her eyes leave me, they are fixed upon the hideous monotony of that endless embroidery."

Madame Paravicini smiled. "Yes, she has a passion for sixteenth-century design. Does she still use up her silks like magic?"

He made no answer.

"I must send her a fresh consignment."

"No! no!" Bellucci roused himself to protest. "But all this is childish and beside the mark. Has she lived at your side, day in, day out, like this—uttering no human sound to reassure you—to take away the sense of the abyss between two souls?"

"That is always there. Speech can do no more than weave a cobweb over the chasm."

"Then it is upon that cobweb that life and reason hang. I tell you, her silence has filled the world with tumult!"

He lifted his hands with a terrified gesture to his head—crying out: "Against such silence I have to stop my ears!" Then presently, with enforced calmness, "As I say, I have at times doubted my sanity—small wonder if I've bruised my wits against that blank, dead wall. Do you understand what I am saying? I have found out that I cannot make Alicia happy—that I cannot make her sad—"

"Ah, you've begun to try that?"

"No! no! God's pity! Don't misunderstand. I only mean that with me she will not laugh or weep, be glad or mourn or give any single sign of—"

"Of what?"

"—of belonging to the race of men."

"I thought you were pleased from the first to take her for an angel."

He ignored the jibe.

"From the first!" he echoed, seeming to try to master and collect his thoughts. "As I look back, the qualities I admired in her were not qualities—they were the absence of qualities. It was that she was not this or that—things that in my intercourse with other women had harassed or enraged me. She did *not* flirt; she did *not* cheapen herself; she did *not* forever smile and chatter—would to God she did! She did *not* give little shrieks and clutches when I lashed up the horses—but I would give half my fortune to hear her crying out or have her catch at my arm. Alicia faces danger as she faces life, with the same dead calm with which the rock of Castellontano looks up to the sunrise, or down at nightfall into the blackness underneath!" He paused an instant—and then, with something like a sob, he caught his breath. "I pour out my heart to her—she wears an air of listening, but her soul is far away. If I ask her questions, she smiles vaguely or shakes her head. She is a stranger—I had almost said a spy in my house. I know her no better than on the day I saw her first. Shall I ever know her? Tell me, what is behind the veil?"

"I cannot tell you."

"You *cannot*?"

"I do not know."

"You do not know! You've known her all her life."

"And yet she is as strange to me as she is to you."

"My God, she is mad!" He staggered back a step, and in the pause he covered his face with his hands.

"We say, 'She is not like others,'" corrected Madame Paravicini. "They are your own words as well—almost the first you ever said about her."

Not like others! The phrase had been one of the few sincere compliments he had ever paid a woman. Not like others! Its ghastly new sense staggered him.

"You also said her beauty was 'strange.' It is a word we have often used in speaking of Alicia. You will find that with *her* at all events familiarity does not breed contempt. She will always be—a little strange."

"Then you knew the full extent of the infamous wrong you did me!"

"One never knows the full extent of any act. Each one is a pebble in a pool—the widening circles carry us to infinity."

"That I should never have guessed! That the real reason should never have touched the outermost edge of my consciousness—why you held me at arm's length after firing me with her witch's beauty!"

"It is true, men are *sometimes* punished for ignoring devotion and the things of the spirit—for staking all upon the lust of the eye."

"Then *this* is your hour, after all," he said.

"This is my hour."

He lifted up his hands with the impotence of wordless horror. Then as he struggled to find his voice he came closer in the gathering twilight and bent over her.

"I can understand your wanting to be revenged on *me*—but Alicia! How dared you make such devil's mockery of another—an innocent woman's happiness?"

"Happiness!" she echoed with low scorn; "to hear you pleading that happiness should be left to women! A new rôle for you, Satanuccio."

"By all that's holy it *would* be a new rôle for me to play a trick so hellish as this of yours. A fellow-creature who had done you not the smallest wrong, who trusted you—"

With both hands she thrust the menacing figure back, stood up and faced him in the dusk.

"An echo! an echo across thirty years! They are my own words to you, that night we said good-bye. No, Satanuccio, the only new thing is that the parts are changed. You have played yours for thirty years—I played mine this one little month of Summer. As for Alicia! Alicia knows neither happiness nor unhappiness. You have had proof of it for a few days. I for twenty-six years. I knew you were not likely to ill-treat her in the vulgar way of violence. You will not starve her body—you cannot starve *her* soul." She began to laugh hysterically.

"Give me credit for true judgment. She was the very woman for you—the only woman who with impunity could be trusted to your keeping. Go back to Castellontano in what black mood you will—or stay away and leave the lady there alone—*she* will not languish. *She* will not pine!" The voice rose sharp with the gathered anguish of years. "Alicia is the one woman in the world whose heart you cannot break."

Without a word, without raising his haggard eyes, Count Bellucci left the room.

VI

WHEN on his return journey Bellucci was within a mile of Castellontano, he called suddenly in a hoarse voice to the coachman:

"Turn back! Turn back!"

The Swiss opened his mouth to ask where he was to go, but a glimpse of the count's face made him determine that silent obedience was his safest course.

At Silvaplana, "Over the Julier Pass!" Bellucci shouted. "I'll take the train at Coire. Arrange it with the Post. I must not be kept waiting." And he flung the man some gold.

Bellucci wandered about, a few miserable days, in places too dismal, as it seemed to him, for it to be likely that he should meet anyone who knew him. When he had endured it as long as he could he made up his mind it was best to go to Paris. At Bâle a glimpse of two of his former boon companions passing the window made him realize that he could not, after all, face the world as yet—his world—gay, cynical, unsparring. So, like a hunted creature, he doubled in his track, and set his face grimly toward Castellontano again.

It was sunset when he arrived, for after a sleepless night he had started on his homeward drive from Coire at five o'clock that morning.

"Madame is in the Tower Room," said old Raffaello.

Bellucci ran breathless up the narrow stair. Yes, there she sat! Had she moved from the window since he left her that morning for Thusis—half a century ago? He had been wrong to speak of her as one without pursuits save watching him. Although it was true she never wrote a letter, or sang, or played a note, or opened a book—she had, after all, three other occupations. One, that he had shrunk from mentioning, was staring down the Val Bregaglia; of another Madame Paravicini had reminded him—the well-nigh endless stitching at this horrible embroidery, as he called it. He had left her at it, and it was upon this she was engaged when, looking up, she saw her husband again before her. The needle she had put in underneath she drew slowly out on top, and then sat waiting with a dim smile on her face.

"How do you do?" he said.

"Well, thank you."

He looked at the vari-colored thing that fell in folds from her lap down to the floor—so voluminous it must be meant for a coverlid, he thought, and shuddered at what dreams must come to one lying underneath. It was wrought with thick and shining silk of seven strands in a curious wave pattern. Up and down it flowed in pale, iridescent streams of many subtly

shaded colors. As he stared at it the part that lay along the floor seemed to tremble into life, and then to crawl.

"Coil up that sea-serpent skin, Alicia, and put it out of my sight!"

She obeyed dumbly, and then sat looking at him vacantly with white hands folded.

"For God's sake, speak to me!" he cried. "Say something."

No sound for several seconds, and then with what seemed a supreme effort:

"When shall we go away?" she asked.

He turned and went downstairs. For he realized that going away was impossible—there was no other place for such a wife as his. After long neglect a use had been found at last for Castellontano.

As the days went on, although he was afraid—obscurely, defiantly afraid—of the process that should bring the change about, it seemed to him that Alicia was slowly waking out of her trance. The awakening, if indeed he did not imagine it, was inconceivably horrible to him. It did not yet lend expression to the terrible, beautiful face—but surely the frozen faculty of speech little by little was thawing.

Bellucci's life of cynical self-indulgence ill fitted him to welcome and to foster the poor, pitiful, first attempts of a soul groping its way out of the twilight. Better that she should say nothing, than utter childishness, he said to himself; thinking of himself first, himself last—himself above all. Although hatred of the incarnate "cheat" was growing upon him, he was still to no small extent under the esthetic spell of her beauty. He must needs watch her, even if he watched her with deep unrest and deepening anger.

For, though much has been said about the obvious and superficial interest so easily excited by the expressive face, the "speaking countenance," vaunted as "reflecting every mood," is well known in the hearts of men to be a wanton, ready to lay modesty and mystery at the feet of any passer-by; yielding up the deep things of the heart without an effort or a pang. But

"You do not know! You've known her all her life."

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although a beautiful face that betrays little besides its beauty—not limiting its significance by concrete expression, not wasting itself in facile looks, setting no petty bounds to its meaning and its message—although such a face is the subtlest means nature has discovered for firing the souls of men—making poets and making heroes; still, after all the world's long lessening, you will hear of the fascination of a face "which mirrors every passing thought," and no word of the magic of immobility. It was this that in Alicia had arrested and held fast the dissolute fancy of the man at her side. Nor could he now effectually rid himself of the conviction that some day that perfect face would render up its secret; and he watched it, hypnotized. Such a face might, if she would let it, express all that human hearts may know of gladness or regret; and he watched it, waiting, waiting—with a patience new to him, for the revelation that he felt must come. He studied that faint smile—no, it was not "smiled," it was implied. You had to be observant, or you lost it. It was, he discovered, rather a light in the face than a movement of the muscles; and it yet had meant more to him than any other woman's dimpled laughter. There were no lines in her face—there never would be, he told himself. What little she allowed to look out from "the windows of her soul" (the mockery of the phrase!) she suffered to go no farther than the orbit of her eyes. Faint pleasure, dim regret—she kept the light and the shadow alike *inside* her eyes; nothing ever overflowed the long-fringed margins of those wells of darkness.

She had learned at last that when Bellucci was with her she must lay aside her fantastic work. As he sat moodily smoking, surreptitiously watching her listless hands and far-away eyes, she would sometimes rise and carry a little inlaid table over to the south window of the tower, and lay out the patience cards, her only other occupation. Bellucci, wholly ignorant of what he looked upon as an imbecile pastime for persons in their second childhood, watched the apparently aimless sorting

of the cards with a listlessness mixed with contempt. But he would follow, fascinated, the movement of the long white hands, and he would shudder when he remembered that he had never touched them but to find them cold. How typical of her this companionless game, in which there was neither expectation nor disappointment, neither winning nor losing. For although Bellucci did not know it, the patience Alicia was trying was the intricate one of Kings and Queens.

Now this game is by so much like to marriage, that many play thereat and few know how to end the game with united couples. Alicia had seen Madame Paravicini do it, but it had never come right for her.

Still she would go on laying out the cards, stacking, shuffling, laying again, stacking, shuffling, endlessly, hour after hour, and Bellucci would sit looking at her. He was mated to this. His keen perception mated to this deadness of sense, his hot spirit mated to this icy calm, his impatience to her patience. Ah, yes, her only game was not ill-chosen.

One day when he came up into the tower room he found the huge square of Alicia's bewildering embroidery hung across the north window.

"Why have you put that there?" he exclaimed angrily.

As she said nothing he tore it down and tossed it in the corner. But when he came the next evening there it was again, shutting out the Silser See and the view toward St. Moritz. This time he pretended not to notice how he had been disobeyed.

She sat by the south window in the twilight, mute, motionless.

"Speak to me, Alicia."

"When shall we go away?"

"I am not sure I shall go now. The chamois-hunting has begun."

She answered never a word. He thought how any other woman he had ever known would have cried out upon his broken promise, would have raged at her own disappointment, at his unfaith. And he smiled grimly to think how gladly he would listen to a torrent

of reproach. Her face seemed only to grow colder and more marble-like—save for a slight flutter of the lowered eyelids.

"Well, have you nothing to say against my plan?" he cried in impotent exasperation.

She lifted her dark eyes and looked down the Bregaglia valley.

"It will be desolate here when—"

"When—?" he leaned forward eagerly.

"Even now there are no birds."

The inconsequence of the remark maddened him. With a smothered oath he turned his back, away from her, and leaned out of the window.

The wall, a fragment of it man-built, the rest rock-reared, dropped sheer down into the dusk. Not even a chamois, he said to himself, could find footing there. He shut his eyes, for his head was swimming.

"It is that cursed tapestry of hers—it makes the tower rock." Cautiously he opened his eyes again. Alicia had moved to the adjoining window, and was leaning out till her long chain, with its heavy heart of gold, fell over the stone sill and half a yard down the castle wall, clinking as it swayed. She watched the pendulum-like motion till it almost ceased, and then, taking the chain from round her neck she unclasped it, and in a single strand, with the heavy heart at the end, allowed it to slip through her white fingers down into the twilight as far as it would go. She twisted the end of the chain twice round her forefinger and swung it to and fro, listening to the clink of the heart against the stone. And he had shut himself up here in the midst of such wild desolation with—what? He looked at her as she turned her face toward him in the dusk, and he shrank from the mindless words she might be going to utter.

"I saw a bird once," the clear voice fell on him like cold water-drops, "but it would not stay. It flew down there toward Italy;" she pointed to the gloom-shrouded valley. "They have all gone now, but us—all gone to Italy." She had never spoken so many con-

secutive words in his hearing before. But there was no gladness in his heart—nothing but shrinking and despair.

She had stopped swinging the chain and leaned a little farther out—a little farther—a little farther yet. Bellucci watched her, fascinated. He could easily have reached across the little space dividing the two windows and have touched her, but with a nervous grip he held to his stone window-ledge and watched her with narrowed eyes. Would she go on in that half-crazed fashion, staring after the birds bound Southward, till she should some day lose her balance and go flying after them headlong down the precipice?

"Come in, come in," he called with sudden sharpness, "shut down the windows! The night is cold."

The next day he went away chamois-hunting.

He came back from time to time and then was off again. The Autumn was a very open one—there had as yet been but one fall of snow, quickly disappearing under the ardent sun. The weather was unprecedented, and in Bellucci's absence Alicia roved about day and night, with growing restlessness. His returns home, lowering, sharp of tongue and filled from crown to heel with a burning impatience, seemed to snuff out the little marsh-light that had begun to flicker across the surface of Alicia's soul. It was as if her mind, at the crucial moment of her life, had come timidly to peer out upon the world, had seen Bellucci, and shrank back into those dim caves where only echoes came. She relapsed again into her old speechlessness, after one evening in the tower, where he found her on one of his returns. When she caught sight of him she put up her hands above her work as if begging him to let her go on.

"Pretty rainbows!" she said in a strange, coaxing tone, and as if encouraged that he forbore to tear the fabric from her, she passed her cold, white fingers over the long stitches, saying gently, "Feel! like feathers—like the breast of a bird."

He turned his eyes away from her,

wondering at the gloom of the room, and saw that another piece of her tapestry was hung before the windows looking east.

"You want to shut out all the light with this damned stuff?" he cried.

"Yes," she answered tonelessly, "I will shut out all the light."

"Do you dream that I will let you?"

"Yes, Satanuccio."

He started. Had she overheard Madame Paravicini?

"Why do you call me that?"

"I call you by your name."

But she never spoke to him again.

VII

COMING back late one night, Bellucci heard someone moving about among the rocks and bushes on the slope of the castle hill. He stopped to listen.

"Is that you, Alicia?" he called. No answer.

"Who is there?" No sound.

"Is Herr Stockau in his rooms?" he asked Raffaello on entering.

"I do not know, signor. I will see."

Bellucci followed the man. In his study, bent down under the green shade of a lamp, sat the old Austrian before an open book. He wore a black skull-cap, and his spectacles gathered and focused all the light there was, magnifying horribly his faded eyes.

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte—" he rose without pretence of welcome, but civilly enough.

"I heard you just now, did I not, coming up from the garden?"

"No, monsieur. I never go out so late. It is a walk sufficiently rugged by the light of day."

"I thought I heard someone."

"It was doubtless Madame la Comtesse."

"Oh, hardly."

"Beyond a doubt, monsieur"—and with a sudden roughness he said, "You are very much away of late."

"Yes, I always hunt a good deal at this time of the year." Bellucci turned to go. "Good night: I won't disturb your studies."

"Stop, monsieur. I have meant to come to you myself. I have meant to say to you that Madame la Comtesse is too much alone."

Bellucci's eyes flashed an instant at the old man's temerity; then he shrugged his shoulders and laid his hand on the knob of the door.

"I tell you, monsieur," the old man went on roughly, "when you are not here—and I may at risk of your displeasure remind you, that means most of the time—Madame la Comtesse wanders about by herself, not only all the day, but half the night."

"What does it matter?" said Bellucci. "Everybody has gone," adding with a sudden menacing gleam in his eyes. "There is no one here to spy upon her."

But if the Austrian interpreted rightly Bellucci's resentment of comment, he disregarded the warning.

"She ought not to be so much alone. I cannot think why she haunts the rocks above the Alpine garden."

"There is no *reason* in anything she does," said Bellucci brutally.

"And at night," the old man went on, "there is no more desolate spot. It is strange, monsieur, that so fragile a lady should know no fear."

It was best that this old gnome should hear the truth and cease his troubling. Bellucci faced round upon him once more.

"I should have thought you would understand the lack of imagination, of *mind*, involved in not being afraid. You are quite right; my wife is never frightened." And he opened the door and shut it hard behind him.

But putting again into words that characteristic of Alicia's, gave it a new power to torment him. As he thought of this imperviousness to fear it became, more than ever, part and parcel of her uncanniness. It was this, more than anything else, that removed her at once, and forever, from the warm sentience of normal human life—made her sister to the rocks and caverns. Small wonder that she haunted them. She, too, in lieu of speech, had only echoes—for smiles and tears, for love.

or hate, or fearing, an unshaken and impenetrable calm. That night he woke in the dark and closely-curtained bed-room to see a pale light shining in through a crack in the door of Alicia's boudoir. Noiselessly he rose, crossed the floor and peered within. There she sat!—her black hair streaming over her shoulders, working by the light of the great full moon—working at the abhorred design. As he stood staring at it the pale woman and the rock-built castle itself seemed to swim before his eyes. He turned away without a word, groping his way back, grateful for the dark. But when he turned, the little beam of pallid light seemed to pierce his brain. He shut his eyes, and lo! the design of Alicia, a tapestry, in waves of color, was painted all across the dark!

Night after night he struggled with the vision, finding, as people with imagination may, that in the obscure chambers of the brain form and color can be either noble stimulant or deadly poison. No wise man has yet come from the East, or from the West, to give us any measure of the power these things have to lift up or to make sick the spirit. To Bellucci the pattern growing so swiftly under the cold, white fingers was a design of inane cunning to express Bewilderment—hopeless—stark! Yes, that was what it was! Dazed bewilderment—mind unmoored and drifting. Just that, expressed in turns of color and of line.

His increasing hatred of his wife mingled with a half-mad desire—passion, rather—to force from her some sign of fear. Not for a moment meaning to carry out any such scheme, he fed his fancy with schemes of violence or horror which should stamp animal pain and shrinking, if nothing else, upon the changeless beauty of that face. But while fear kept as far aloof as ever from Alicia—on a sudden it turned and leapt upon Bellucci. For—strange and horrible effect following upon this now complete day-time dumbness—*she began to talk in her sleep*, rapidly, volubly, indistinctly, but with an eagerness that seemed to

grow. Bellucci, who had longed so passionately for a glimpse into that soul, must needs listen, though he died. Like some guilty eavesdropper with ear to keyhole, he hung above her in the night, straining every nerve to piece her wildness into images of reason, or, failing that, to form some picture, for his own enlightenment, of the inside of that darkened mind. So long he had been asking: "What is it she thinks about all day? What was it that even in the days when I was kind she kept so jealously hid from me?" Was it because his own heart beat so loud, and the blood throbbed in his ears to deafness, that he could find in the vague, broken phrases no faintest relation to the things of daylight and of reason? Again and again he caught the phrase, "The deep, deep wells"—and by degrees he made out the words of much more that she uttered, but was as far as ever from the meaning—if indeed he were not mad to look for meaning.

"Hush, hush!" she would whisper. "Come, Alicia, I will show you the deep wells. . . No one else must know. Wait till night. 'Sh! Wait until the dark comes down.' She would be quiet for a space. Then with eager excitement:

"Come! Come! Oh-h, the sharp rocks hurt her hands—but climb up, climb up. *Ha!*" and she would clutch the counterpane. "The great slab is slipping," and she drew a sharp breath. "Ah! Now! 'Sh! Do you see? *The gleam of water* . . . See, it smiles up at the little moon. So long it never saw the little moon. 'Sh! 'Sh! . . . Can you creep in under the rock? Move that little slab—never mind hurt hands. There! Yes, there's room now . . . Oh-h . . . the deep, deep wells under the mossy rocks!" And her voice would grow inarticulate with wonder and excitement. Then a little more calmly she would whisper:

"One well is nearly dry. A great crack in the side— A big round stone at the bottom. Oh, the deep, deep well—all round and deep. The black one full of inky water goes down—down

under the world. 'Sh! 'Sh! Come away. Pull the slab back. No one must know."

Bellucci would lie and wait for dawn—for the blessed time of daylight, when dumbness should descend again. In vain each morning he resolved that he would sleep next night in the chamber farthest off from her, or else without the castle walls—in some safe place, where her horrible whispering could not torture his strained ears. But for all his vows he would come creeping in each night and bend above her, listening to the legend of "the wells."

"Come," he said to her harshly one late afternoon, "come, show me where you walk when I go hunting, and you are here alone."

She dropped her eyes. Bellucci rang the bell.

"Bring your mistress a hat and cloak," he said. "I shall wait for you, Alicia, down at the door." Presently she joined him.

"Now where?" She seemed to think a moment and then led the way round to the place where the building had so long ago been abandoned. Some of it was mere foundation. Some of it had reached the height of its first tall story. Late in the year as it was, the doorways opened on flower-carpeted courts and the windows framed great squares of orange sunshine. Without an instant's pause she led the way to the door that the mad architect had made to open out upon the precipice. She stood there quietly looking down. Bellucci noticed how the little pointed shoe on one of Alicia's fearless feet projected a full inch over the cliff.

"Is it *here* you come?" he asked, incredulous. She nodded, still standing with one foot across the threshold, he only a little behind. As he looked over her shoulder he saw nothing but the sheer drop down, five hundred feet. A lightning-quick impulse seized him—a touch and she would be launched into eternity! He drew back, knowing, with a horrible certainty now, that if he stood there longer he must yield. But

—he could not shake off the obsession. "If she wanders here alone and after dark—shall I not secretly come home some time under cover of the night"—that would be safe—no one would ever know but that she slipped and fell . . .

He walked across the flower carpet to the northern entrance, turned, and deliberately paced off the distance to where she stood still motionless on the brink, but now facing him. Was she consciously tempting him, daring him? The great eyes were fixed on his face as though she read him like an open book. Whether it be true or not that speech is designed for the concealment of thought, this much is certain: where no speech is, to distract or falsify, a certain order of thought-communication may be established, more certain, clear and eloquent than any words in any of the tongues of men, the living or the dead. Alicia, with all her gentleness, had made it plain long before this that she understood her husband and despised him. Today she stood on the threshold of the cliff, saying, without the clumsy medium of words, "You cannot terrify me. *But I can terrify you.*" Instinctively he made haste to wrap the cloak of words round the nakedness of his thought.

"I wish you wouldn't stand so near the edge. Are you not afraid?" She shook her head.

"Fear itself is afraid of Alicia!" he thought, with an inward shudder. But he began half-consciously to shape his plans.

He must learn more about these nocturnal ramblings. He must not trust to chance.

That night as he hung above her in the darkness it seemed to him that she was more restless than before. Once something like a sob shook the delicate body, and twice she moaned like some disembodied spirit struggling with a grief not human. Out of her rambling words Bellucci caught, now and then, sentences that seemed to have a ghostly dreamland sequence, but no rational meaning.

"I must not think. I must go out and forget—yes—yes. I'll go to the

wells. I'll make fast my heart to a long, long chain. Oh—h—not long enough, not long enough. Go home. You have many skeins of silk at home in the tower. Yes—now—knot the beautiful colors fast together, and wind them in a ball. There, there! I have yards on yards on yards. It must reach the bottom now. 'Sh! Make the heart fast. The poor heart trembles, full of prayers. 'Sh! Make it fast. *Now!* It slips into the water, and drops all night long into blackness. How deep it goes! Oh, but I'm tired and cold; and my heart is heavy—heavy, heavy and the silk string far from strong. Oh—h—my heart is heavy, down there in the dark. 'Sh! I must leave it. I'll wind the silk around a stone. Hush! Hush!"

Was she elaborating her foolish game of dangling the gold trinket out of the castle window? Or—a light broke!—*out of the door*, in the unfinished building opening on the cliff? No doubt—and the deep well was the Val Bregaglia, and she played her ghastly game leaning over the sheer castle rock. At all events, he would steal home some night and see.

VIII

THE next morning he rode away, telling Alicia that he might be gone a week. He returned the second night. Behind a great rock, in a larch wood that stretched away and upward on the right of the Maloja road, a mile and a half from Castellontano, he tethered his horse and went forward on foot. The night was dark and gusty, with now and then a glimpse of gibbous moon. The protracted fine weather was ending abruptly; the pinch of Winter was in the air. Arrived in Maloja, as he expected, without encountering a soul, Bellucci wended his way cautiously, giving a wide berth to the Kursaal buildings, although they were shut up and, he felt sure, deserted. The members of his own strange household were, to the best of his knowledge, the sole remaining dwellers at that end of the lake.

Lights were flitting about in the castle. By a circuitous route, keeping clear of the road, he reached the abandoned building to the right of the castle. He made his way round to the side that was overlooked by the tower, and crouched down, keeping as well as he was able out of the keen gusts of searching wind that tore so fiercely round the corner. Looking up, he could see Alicia's only untapestried windows, the two looking down Chiavenna way. For an hour and a half he crouched there—long after all the lights were out save those in the two south windows. And still he kept his post, in spite of weariness and cold. At last the wind brought sharply the noise of the great door banging, and he started up to listen. No sound of anyone coming that way, not a footfall. Cautiously he made his way toward the castle, stopping to listen at every step.

Presently he started and crouched down, for just below him, from behind a boulder, appeared a wavering light. When cautiously he lifted up his head, the light had moved a little further down, wavering, uncertain. The white creature bearing it surely was a woman, surely was Alicia—but where was she going? What did she intend to do? He followed slowly over the roughest part of the trackless rock-piled slope that stretched from the castle to the Maloja road. Once or twice he slipped, and silently cursed his crazy errand. The distance was really nothing, but Bellucci's anxiety and vague horror of his journey's end, made it seem half a lifetime of fearful sliding from rock to rock, of listening to his own heart-beats and watching the wraith-like woman and *ignis fatuus* that flickered on before.

Now she stopped. The lantern was set down, and sent up into the gusty night only a fluctuating, dim gold haze.

Bellucci, afraid to advance straight upon her, circled slowly round. From below her he could see that she strained and wrenched to move a flat piece of rock out of its slanting position. To his amazement she seemed to suc-

ceed. He crept nearer on noiseless feet till at last, by leaning forward, he could see the narrow, faintly-illuminated opening in the tumbled rock-masses just beyond, through which Alicia was creeping with the lantern in her hand. He ventured nearer, the wind piping such a wild lament, Bellucci felt that any slight noise he might chance to make would be indistinguishable. All sense of stiffness and of cold vanished. His blood ran fever-hot and every sense had grown preternaturally keen. Plainly he saw Alicia's white figure, with the lantern, creeping past a circular opening in the floor of the dim-lit cavern. The hole seemed like the ordinary mason-built mouth of a well. From where he stood it was impossible to see the bottom. But now beyond the lantern caught an answering gleam!—a sheet of shifting light.

Before Bellucci's incredulous eyes the back of the little cavern widened out under the approaching lantern rays. He could see how the rock above sloped down sharply like an attic roof, above a circular sheet of ink-black water. Beside this pool—Bellucci saw it must be at least six metres across—Alicia set the lantern down. Why was she crouching there?

Bellucci moved nearer to the narrow mouth of the cavern, till he could see that she had put down beside the lantern a ball of vari-colored silk and was loosening the great gold heart from the chain about her neck. She made the heart fast to the end of the silk and, with eyes gleaming, rapidly told off loop on loop, as sailors coil their rope. Suddenly with a deft motion she cast the heart from her into the middle of the inky pool, and leaned to listen. Then, lifting up her head, she let out more line with a rapidity almost frenzied. Again she stopped. No sound! As she lifted up her head above the lantern, or dropped it to listen at the water's brink, grotesque shadows darted above the cavern and seemed to rush out at the narrow mouth—a never-ending horde, to leap about Bellucci with vague antics,

menacing disaster. And still the white figure crouched by the pool.

"Damned witchcraft," muttered Bellucci, tightening his fingers. Alicia turned and saw him. With an impulse of blind fury against the incarnate enigma he leaped down into the cavern, flung his arms about her and threw her headlong into the pool.

As the waters closed over her in troubled gleams of black and gold, Bellucci heard a voice on the height above, calling. Quick as thought he put his foot upon the lantern. As he turned with dazed haste to make his way out, remembering the other open "trap" upon his left—he felt himself held fast. Ghostly little fingers caught at his flying feet. He struggled and almost fell. Ah, he remembered! "The witch has spread her silken net," and he freed himself from the soft, clinging meshes. He groped about feverishly an instant, gathering up the snarled silk in his hands, and striking painfully against a loose stone. With the soft tangle—like Alicia's hair—he fastened the broken lantern to the stone, threw them both into the water and fled out of the unholy place, breathless, trembling.

The calling had continued at intervals. Stockau's voice! Bellucci was not so dazed but that he realized that this time it came from below.

It seemed to be advancing straight in the direction where Bellucci stood, shaking in every limb and with but one perception left quite unobscured: mortal horror of the pit behind him. He struck blindly out in the direction of the Kursaal, hoping to reach it by a détour to the left, and counting on Stockau's moving up or down in the direction of the Alpine garden. He had not stumbled far when he heard a step and a gruff, "Who goes there?" only a few yards from him. Whether below it, above, to the right or left, Bellucci was too dazed to know. But this much was clear: the risk of not answering, and then being discovered, was too great; he must brave it out. With an oath he said:

"Can't you hear? I've been shout-

ing to you against the wind for full five minutes."

"It is true I grow a little deaf," the Austrian said, with a sound of relief in his rough accent. "But it was not *your* voice, monsieur, I listened for; I thought you had gone for some days."

"No, I told Alicia I should return to-night even if I were late. My horse has cast a shoe and gone lame. I've left him below."

"But did you meet madame?"

"My wife out at this hour?"

"Yes—or at least I heard the great door bang, and I thought when I looked out I saw a lantern gleam down here."

"How long ago?"

"Oh, as long as it takes an old man to throw on his clothes."

"It is quite impossible that my wife—but I don't understand in any case why *you*—"

"No, monsieur, you have not heard. We have made a great discovery. At least, I should say that madame your wife has made a discovery. I know of it only today myself, and like Madame la Comtesse I am unable to sleep for thinking of it."

The black cloud masses had hurried past the misshapen moon, and in the momentary gleam Stockau stopped and peered about anxiously.

"I am glad if I was mistaken. For so well now do I realize how perilous this slope may be at night, that I would fain persuade madame your wife to leave further investigation till the hours of daylight."

"She is, beyond a doubt, in bed, asleep."

"Monsieur forgets what I told him of her nightly rambles, when monsieur is not at home. But I no longer blame her, nor so much as wonder. I understand the fascination of the place as even *I* never did before." The gruff old voice was trembling with excitement. "You have here upon the Castle Hill, under the rock detritus—"

"—a murdered woman scarce grown cold," Bellucci filled in silently the moment's pause.

"You have, Monsieur le Comte,

marvelous, I had almost said incredible evidence of the Wonder-working Age!"

"The Age of Witchcraft!" ejaculated Bellucci, more to himself than to his companion.

"You may well call so the Age of Ice. You are the possessor, sir, of two, at least, of the most perfect examples of glacial erosion known to science."

The jargon bewildered Bellucci's dazed wits.

"I do not understand these things," he said, making as if to hurry on.

"A child can understand; for *there*"—Stockau laid a detaining hand on his host's arm and pointed back—back to where Alicia lay under the rock and under the water—"you have, down there, the object lesson, the proof—"

"Proof," repeated Bellucci blindly.

"Ayel *Proof* of the great drama that has been enacted on the Castle Hill!"

Bellucci stood still. He thought he should have fallen—or rather he had distinctly the sensation of actual dropping through a dizzy void.

"Strange, strange," the old man repeated, still with unwonted excitement. "that one who watches as devoutly as I do the varied aspects of Nature—that I should for years have studied this moraine zone, should have read the deep-graved glacier runes scoring the castle rock—that I should in my poor way have scratched for years in the light humus of the Alpine garden, and never dreamed of what lay underneath."

"Underneath?" repeated Bellucci vaguely. "Why should there be anything underneath?"

"It remained for Madame la Comtesse to show us the two stupendous *Glacier Meules* that have been ground out of Castellontano rock through the long Arctic nights and fierce short Summers of the glacial era."

"The deep, deep wells!" came back to Bellucci like an echo from another world.

"You have heard, perhaps," said the savant eagerly, "as you have walked over a glacier, a deep rumbling underfoot, as of subterranean thunder?"

"No, I have no experience of glaciers."

"Ah, I forgot. But that sound I speak of is the melted ice rushing fiercely into the shaft of a Glacier Mill. If the water finds at the bottom a loose boulder—hugged up by the glacier, and carried maybe for miles—the terrific force of the falling water dashes the boulder round and round in its prison, till it hollows out a basin for itself in the solid rock. A basin first, and, as the ages pass, the glacier millstones hollow out vast pits. There are two of them down there."

"—and in one a murdered woman," Bellucci's thought pieced out. He seemed, curiously, to have lost his sense of volition—a partial numbness had fallen upon him. His brain went on beating out the same thing and his feet moved slowly, heavily, like the feet of the very old. He had no longer any wish or any power to shake off his companion.

"To think of this visible and striking testimony to the great geologic drama, at our very door! One of the vast stone caldrons has a crack in the side, and is nearly empty save of its two polished grinders, and some rubbish. The other," he drew a quicker breath, "ah, the interest, the absorbing, electrifying interest of these things!" he exclaimed half to himself, adding to his host, "The other pit is full of water, and we do not yet know how deep the centuries have worn it. No wonder Madame la Comtesse is so wrought upon, open as she is to the great influences of mountain, rock and chasm."

With a vague sense of cynical amusement Bellucci realized that the discovery had had the same effect upon his wife as on the savant. It melted the snows of their silence and marked with both the end of the Reign of Ice.

"No other woman," the old man said with something like enthusiasm, "no other woman, I do verily believe, has ever been before so responsive to the majesty of these great forces—of," his voice sank reverently, "of the gigantic forces that make the best things man has done seem child's play. *Man!* Who that has come near to inanimate Nature

in her great moods of terrible poetry and power, who can thereafter think of men save as of ants—swarming over their little perishable earth-built kingdoms, bearing their food or their dead—a travesty on human importance!"

They had reached the castle now, and stood under one of the tunnel-like arches.

"If you find that I was right, monsieur—if madame your wife has gone abroad, to look again before she sleeps into one of the most curious chapters of all Nature's strange story—do not be surprised, Monsieur le Comte, do not, above all, be angered. Small wonder if she cannot wait till day, as she as good as promised me."

"She promised you!"

"Yes, she has the true spirit, receptive, indomitable but patient—"

"You say she promised you? She *spoke* to you!"

"Yes, *mon Dieu!* Why not?"

"To be sure, why not?" There was silence for a moment under the arches. Then, with his old stiffness, "Good night!" said the Austrian.

"One moment. You said if she could wait till day—what will you do when day comes?"

"Sound the great Glacier Mill, of course!"

"What for?"

"Why, to ascertain the depth."

"Ah! to see what there is at the bottom."

"What should be there?"

"Its millstones, one or more, and—"

"Yes?"

"We will sound it first and then empty it."

"*I forbid you!*" At the almost frenzied resonance of the sudden cry in that place of hollow echoes, the old man started back and leaned a withered hand against the wall.

"You—you cannot mean to prevent—"

"I do mean that if you owe anything to the roof that has so long sheltered you—go secretly and close up the mouth of that witches' cavern. I adjure you by my father's memory—let no one ever know—"

"But—" the old man was trying to recover himself—"in the interests of knowledge—"

"The Gletscher Mühle belong to me! I will not have them touched. I tell you the mills are mine."

"They are the Mills of the Gods, monsieur. Have no fear, I shall not abuse your hospitality, though I have done with it." He walked away a few steps in the darkness, stopped and called back, "Understand, as well as a mind like yours is able—that I make great sacrifice to you of the interests of science. There is much still to find out about the laws of glacial erosion—why their movement is like man's, like the course of Empire, always and unerringly from east to west. "Ah," cried the old voice, "you do not understand, but Madame la Comtesse could tell you"—he groped a few paces back to where Bellucci stood—"Madame la Comtesse could tell you that the inside of these—"

Bellucci's wild laughter stopped him.

"You think that lady could tell tales of the inside of your hell-pots? Tell me, Sir Scientist, did it never occur to you that madame my wife was mad?"

"No, Monsieur le Comte."

"But very strange, eh, Sir Scientist?"

"Strangely beautiful and strangely sad." The old man went within.

A few minutes later Bellucci stood at the door of the great roofless building where Alicia had lingered unafraid. He stared up at the rolling cloud masses till it seemed to him, standing there on Castellontano rock, that he could feel the motion of the whirling world. Rooted, scarcely daring to draw breath in his sudden access of faintness, Bel-

lucci turned his eyes instinctively for light and reassurance to the moon. But the clouds had half obscured it—the clouds—God! What pattern were they weaving over there? In shaded waves of moonlight and of shadow, the vast design moved giddily across the moon. Had he sent Alicia hence only that she might hang her tapestries along the walls of heaven? He shut out the sight. Would he come to fear the lifting of his eyelids, lest he should see by sunlight or by moonlight patterned across the sky this design to turn men's brains? As he stood there he fell into trembling, for albeit his eyes were closed he saw the vision still—only clearer, with more color and more motion—as he had seen it in Alicia's arras when it seemed to rock the tower—as he had seen it through many an hour of the night, painted on the dark. And it came to him that Alicia had wrought that pattern of Bewilderment upon the tissue of his brain. Oh, to blot it out—to blot it out!

He opened his eyes and saw that the world still reeled and staggered before that ensign in the heavens, fluttering in ghostly fashion before the shamed face of the misshapen moon. For one sick instant his eyes turned away and plunged into the soft gloom of the Val Bregaglia, searching in a dazed despair for that haven where no light shines and wavers, mocks and beckons.

A meteor shot down—the darkness drank it up.

"There light is conquered—light is quenched," whispered Bellucci. "That is my pathway too." And he stepped out of the wind-swept court into mid-air.



AN ACCOMMODATING YOUTH

GOTROX (*with a sneer*)—But how do you propose to support my daughter?
SENSELESS SUITOR—Oh, I will leave that entirely to you.

AFTER THE THEATRE

By Florence Wilkinson

SCENT of roses, lights and wine,
Rosy lights and flashing mirrors,
Brilliant nodding hot-house women,
Whose bare shoulders, like rare flowers
Ringed with petals, lift and shine.

Half-draped bosoms, penciled eyes,
Hot, unhappy lusts and secrets
Burning low across the cognac:
Words that rankle, tinkle-tinkle,
While white hands in dalliance-wise,
Play and flutter for disguise.

Two by two, they linger late,
He a boy of Doric beauty,
Fresh as one of Bion's shepherds;
She a woman with the bitter
Scarlet lips that soon or late
Are bequeathed to them who hate,
Derelicts or whims of fate.

Swift as witch-runes from a book,
Sharply dissonant words are shook
Under her blue drift of plumage,
And her eyes like narrow lightnings
Stab, but do not scar his calmness.
What wild war is in her look!

Some are lovers, beyond a doubt,
Or the weary or desirous,
Two by two they play their dramas;
Behind the uncertain wavering curtain
Of their masks, their thoughts peer out.

Like a moon-gemmed constellation,
Girdled with publicity,
Each group is a flaring unit,
To all others a mystery
In the crowd's loud isolation.

TILLIE HENROTIN'S DEVELOPING SOUL

By Elizabeth Jordan

JESSICA and I met her at a very early stage of our educational development. We were, I recall, ten, and engaged with our class in a soul-sickening struggle with long division. It revealed its secrets to Jessica, as I also recall, after a few days of such acute mental and physical effort that small bunches of muscle formed on her jaw-bones, owing to the grim determination, she explained, with which she had set her teeth. I set my teeth, too, but my mathematical powers, always more or less torpid, merely grew more sluggish under the effort. It was the soothing suspicion that another member of the class knew as little as I did that first directed my attention toward Tillie Henrotin. She sat at a desk across the aisle from mine, and during our daily arithmetic hour her dark little face reflected my own mental stupor as perfectly as a mirror reflects a blank wall.

She was a new pupil, and for a day or two I contented myself with shy nods, glances pregnant with understanding, and an occasional disgusted grimace behind the back of some inspired infant who stood at the blackboard lost in the ecstasy of high mathematical achievements we two could not follow. But one fatal morning Jessica emerged from the intellectual smoke of combat and took her place at the same post of honor, where she worked out with consummate ease the longest and most baffling problem yet given the class. Even now, after the lapse of twenty years, I can see her as she stood there, a sturdy little girl in a blue gingham pinafore buttoned down the back, her two short brown pig-tails standing

stiffly out behind her, a high light striking the garnet ring on the third finger of her busy right hand, every pore of her person oozing smug satisfaction with the intellectual life.

Yes, I can see her, and I can also feel again the swirl of my own emotions as I gazed across the bridgeless chasm that yawned between me and the friend of my heart. Dully, hopelessly, I realized that Jessica and I had come to the parting of the ways. On what common ground could I hope to meet this gifted being whose glib explanations, as she "divided" and "carried," fell dully on my ears, but conveyed nothing to the brain. The other children seemed to be following her—several of them, at least; and those who did not betrayed themselves only to my skeptical eye by an exaggerated alertness of comprehension. All but Tillie Henrotin! Over Tillie's dark little brow, as over mine, rolled clouds of doubt. Tillie was even as I was; Tillie was my other self. I spent the ensuing recess, so to speak, on Tillie's sympathetic breast, even as she reclined on mine; and while I explained to her in shrill, childish tones, with which I strove to drown her feeble interruptions, why I could not follow the labyrinthian intellectual path that stretched before us, Jessica stalked in lonely grandeur in a distant part of the playground, turning toward me at intervals an appealing and misty eye. Jessica was experiencing the large generosity of the triumphant soul; at the slightest sign from me she was ready to approach and forgive and forget my defection, and I knew it. But I knew, too, that she would offer to help me with my long division, and this final

humiliation I resolved to spare myself. I gripped more tightly Tillie Henrotin's waist, I leaned closer to Tillie Henrotin's black curls, I was, so to speak, merged in Tillie Henrotin. Thus, as we walked on, the unconscious Tillie, responding with childish satisfaction to this sudden ardor, hastened to tell me the story of her life.

I learned at once that Tillie was a young person of extraordinary interest, in that, while she had a brain capacity equal to any task, she dared not tax it owing to a frail body which would not stand the strain. Tillie did not put it just this way, but I grasped the idea. The doctor had told Tillie's mother that the child had "an over-active mind"; Tillie had that expression pat; it had evidently been much used in her hearing. She must be held back at school, not pushed, the doctor had explained, and Tillie had brought the teacher a note from him. All this she told me in a well-satisfied voice. It was plain, even to me, that she fully realized the romantic interest of her situation.

"I have headaches," said Tillie proudly, in conclusion. "So the doctor said just go to school and p'r'aps I'll learn something from hearing the other girls. An' he says if I don't it won't matter, 'cause the curse of the age is new-fangled notions, an' all I have to do is to be a healthy, happy child."

This sounded delightful, and I regarded Tillie with deep respect and envy. We walked home from school together that afternoon and parted at Tillie's gate with the understanding that she was to call for me in the morning. When I reached my own home I became conscious of a chill in the air. Tracing it to its source I discovered a small figure in a blue pinafore, swinging on the gate of the next house and steadfastly presenting to me the whole expanse of a deeply offended gingham back. It was Jessica. My heart cried out for her, but the gulf of long division yawned between us. I went sadly into the house and sought comfort in that haven of the afflicted soul—my mother's room.

Tillie arrived promptly the next morning and I greeted her with the chastened enthusiasm caused by a previous view of Jessica going to school alone. Tillie was in high spirits.

"My mother says you're an awful nice fren' for me," she began as we started off together. "I told her you didn't know your lessons either, an' Uncle George says two negatives make a positive boon, an' he said it meant you an' me. I made him say it five times, till I learned it to tell you."

Uncle George's meaning was wholly and happily lost to me, but nevertheless I was not pleased. I admit that I experienced some satisfaction in watching Tillie's eyes grow round as I drew a map on the board that day, and that I wrote her composition for her the next afternoon with a well-defined sense of superiority. Also I summoned my father into the arithmetical arena, and partly with his aid and partly, perhaps, through unconscious cerebration, my sleeping brain awoke and long division gave up its secrets to me.

It was a proud moment when, on the morning of the fourth day of my acquaintance with Tillie, I successfully worked out a long "example" on the board. As I returned to my seat my eyes sought and met Jessica's. The loving triumph in them, the telegraphed congratulation, was an X-ray, killing forever the little germ of jealousy in my heart. Our gulf was bridged. Together, our arms around each other's waist, we went home that night, and Tillie Henrotin, trotting beside us, was as if she were not. Tillie did not know this, however, any more than she had known of her part in our temporary separation. She seemed not to be an observant child, and she wholly declined to tax her brain with speculations or theories concerning those around her. She welcomed Jessica so cordially and with such sincere good feeling that it would have been brutal indeed to disturb her conviction that we were to be an inseparable and happy trio, and she accepted the necessary readjustment of her opinions of my brain capacity with unruffled good

humor. We modified her programme of being always with us by several elaborately planned secret excursions without her, and subsequently found our joy in their success much chastened by the discovery that Tillie had not realized that we had gone. She was wholly lacking in jealousy, and so cheerfully phlegmatic in her attitude toward all social and educational conditions that the Henrotin family physician must have felt sublime reassurance as he watched her.

"I mustn't feel very glad an' I mustn't feel very sorry," she confided to Jessica and me one day six months after our acquaintance began, "'cause if I do it will be a strain on my brain. An' I mustn't love folks too much, an' I mustn't hate 'em. Mama says so. I mus' just keep my mind s'rene."

Jessica, fiery, impatient, intense to the tips of her nervous little fingers, backed off and glared at her.

"Don't you love your father an' mother?" she demanded severely.

Tillie returned her look with round, uncomprehending eyes.

"Why, yes, of course I do," she replied comfortably.

"And don't you love us?" Jessica went on inexorably.

"Oh, yes!" This answer came with flattering promptness, if without enthusiasm, but Jessica remained unmoved.

"Would you die for us?" was her next question, delivered with a straight-from-the-shoulder effect.

Tillie looked puzzled, but her simple sincerity remained.

"What for?" she inquired, with a creditable effort to follow the workings of Jessica's mind.

"Why, for us—because you love us. If we had to die, would you die to save us?"

Reduced to these simple terms Tillie's problem became no problem at all.

"No, I wouldn't," she said briefly. "I think it would be silly."

Jessica withered her with a look of whole-hearted contempt and drew me from her contaminating presence.

"Come away," she said grimly, adding audibly as we left Tillie in her ter-

rible isolation: "I don't like girls that wouldn't die for you."

During several days of ensuing coolness Tillie related the incident to her friends, and it was generally felt, I believe, that Jessica's standard was embarrassingly lofty. Certainly there was a falling-off of her followers, and for a time, at least, a perceptible nervousness among those who remained. Who could tell, they seemed to ask themselves and one another, what supreme test of devotion this dauntless soul might yet exact? Jessica paid no attention to all this, however, and reassurance finally came with the obvious reflection that I, being Jessica's closest friend, would naturally be the one called upon to perish if a victim were suddenly required. The adoring school circle closed once more around Jessica, and prominent among its eager faces was that of Tillie, unmoved, unoffended, and ever "s'rene," as Jessica remarked, with a scornful sniff.

The years went by. Jessica and I moved from the fourth grade into the fifth and the sixth and the seventh; and by some means which yet remain unsolved mysteries, Tillie Henrotin went too. She never tried, she never studied, yet in examination after examination she crept through, though always by a margin narrow to extreme precariousness. Jessica and I worried, fretted, sputtered, studied, bound wet towels around our heads in the still watches of the night and studied more, gave up all hope at examination time—and passed. Tillie Henrotin laughed, chatted, visited her friends, strolled cheerfully into our rooms while we were at work, interrupted us, let dust accumulate on her books—and passed. Her recitations were, in themselves, of a painful mediocrity, but she had a knack of interesting the teacher and making that lady converse which I believe to be unequalled in educational annals. Day after day, when her opportunity came for recitation, Tillie, her eyes bright with pleased interest, drew Miss Merrill or Miss Jones or Miss Tyler into the daisied fields of contemporary thought, and daily those excellent

women discoursed throughout the lesson hour and then stopped abruptly, with expressions of surprise and suspicion.

During the high-school course which Tillie took with us the conditions remained the same, with slight modifications. By this time there was something maddening in the fact that Tillie Henrotin, who to the best of our belief never opened a book, was still at least keeping step with us, if a trifle behind. It was almost uncanny, and as hard-working students we resented it. It was when we went to college, however, that the iron entered our souls. For Tillie entered with us, passing her examinations, as usual, by the narrowest possible margin, and accepting the result with her accustomed air of courteous indifference. While we were preparing for the ordeal of examination she was selecting her college outfit, with never a suspicion that she might not need it; and the fact that events, as always, justified her faith, gave us no comfort as we hurriedly tossed together our incomplete belongings, realizing at the last moment the serious disadvantages of true humility. Tillie had by this time acquired a manner of extraordinary detachment, and she admitted that she deliberately cultivated it.

"I am merely a saunterer through life," she explained. "Why should I take things seriously? It's a pleasant road, this college course, and I see pleasant things and people along the way. I'm not going to waste time sitting at the feet of any of them. I don't want to like them. But, on the other hand, I'm certainly not going to lose the view."

She settled down after this oracular utterance, and the college landscape was filled with the figures of young things bringing her bouquets. Tillie accepted the bouquets and subsequently snubbed the young things.

"They take too much time," she explained one evening as she reclined on the divan in our sitting-room, her hands behind her head, her patent leather ties neatly tracing out the

pattern of the wall-paper at the foot of the couch.

Jessica raised her tired eyes from the book she was reading and surveyed her.

"And you haven't the time, I suppose," she suggested ironically. Then she burst out in sudden impatience. "What do you do with it, anyhow, Tillie?" she demanded.

Tillie turned on the couch for a better look at her and lay still, silently considering the question.

"Do you know," she drawled at last, "that's a very interesting problem?"

She sank into silence again, her mind apparently busy with it. Jessica regarded her for a moment, then returned to her book with an expressive elevation of her straight brows. There was silence for five minutes. At last Tillie sat up suddenly, her air surprisingly alert, for her.

"Why, Jessica," she said slowly, "do you know, I really believe you think I waste it." She lay down as one whose feelings had suddenly overcome her at this point, and Jessica, who had been deceived into a quick glance at her, grinned irrepressibly and returned once more to her book. But Tillie desired to talk and with Tillie to desire was to act.

"I had a chat with the doctor while I was home," she went on impersonally, "and he tells me that only by continuing to be a lily of the field can I continue to grace the field at all. He says the least excitement, the least worry, the least emotion, might be fatal. So if you girls will only take care of the little details of that chafing-dish party I'm giving tonight—get the things, you know, and cook 'em—it would spare me a great strain—"

She dodged the pillow Jessica threw at her and strolled out of the room looking hurt. Jessica groaned as she looked after her. Jessica was beginning to take life very seriously. "She lacks the most rudimentary principles," she murmured. "I never knew so undeveloped a creature. She's thoroughly spoiled and she's getting worse every day. What she needs is to know what sorrow is. *That* would teach her!"

Tillie graduated with her class, well at the foot of it and wholly unmoved by the fact. She was in the daisy chain, and this claim to immortality seemed to her sufficient. The Saturday after her graduation she departed for Europe. The following Thursday the civilized world was horrified by the news of the burning in mid-ocean of the *Adriatic*, the ship on which Tillie had sailed. Slowly at first, and then with a rush that filled pages of the newspapers, the horrible details swept in. Tillie Henrotin, traveling with her mother, had been put with the latter and several other passengers into an open boat, commanded by the first officer. Of this boat no tidings were received for eight days. Then came the news of its rescue and of the sufferings of its passengers. Of these only two had survived. One was the chief officer, the other was Miss Tillie Henrotin, of Saint Paul. The newspapers gave in full the officer's story of his experience. Mrs. Henrotin, he said, had died out there on the open sea, in the open boat, on the evening of the third day after the wreck.

Jessica and I read no more; we could not. Jessica laid down the paper and rested her head on her arms. "God, how could she bear it!" she murmured. "A thing one dare not even think about—yet Tillie Henrotin, of all persons, was chosen to go through it. What hideous irony of fate!"

Months passed before we heard from Tillie Henrotin. At first we had dreaded to read the newspapers, fearing to find the record of her death or complete collapse, but time brought us reassurance in the form of a letter from her. She touched only once, and then very briefly, on her recent tragedy. She wrote from Capri, and explained that she was planning to spend the Winter in Algeria, out on the desert. "My lungs have been rather weak since the wreck," she put it, "and the doctor thinks I'd better live in a tent for a few months. He fancies the heat and the quiet and the dry air may build me up. The Drysdales are going with me."

Jessica and I avoided each other's eyes as I laid the letter down after reading it aloud. There was a long silence. Then Jessica said grimly:

"Well, it looks like the turn of the screw. Why couldn't she have been allowed to die and have it over, instead of going by inches and facing the horror of the thing for months?"

I sought reassurance in Tillie's letter, but found none. "She writes lightly enough," I murmured feebly. "Perhaps she doesn't care."

Jessica favored me with a glance of strong disapproval. "Perhaps she doesn't," she retorted drily. "But if you will recall how acutely she cared in the old days when she had to have a tooth filled, you will part with that illusion."

Eight months passed before we heard from Tillie again. Then the New York journals had another horror for us. A party of Americans and English camping in the desert had been attacked by wandering Arabs, robbed, and two of the party seriously injured. The man was at the point of death; his name was Arthur Drysdale. The woman's name leaped from the page to meet our eyes; it was Miss Tillie Henrotin, of Saint Paul. She was not out of danger, but was prostrated from the shock of her experience, following so closely as it did, the writer explained, the tragedy of the *Adriatic*. The entire party, the article concluded, was now safe at Biskra.

Our old classmates began to write us with flattering frequency. They thought we knew more of Tillie's condition than anyone else, and they begged for news and details. But Tillie's own letter, when it came after several months of waiting, was wholly unsatisfactory. The sole information it contained was that she was going to China with a woman missionary she had recently met and who had fired her imagination with tales of the Flowery Kingdom. She was to stay with her friend, a Miss Mary Hatfield, at a little place near Pekin, and we were given the address of her bankers. She said nothing about her health or her Algerian experience.

Jessica and I wrote Tillie frequently in the months that followed, but so far as response went we might as well have dropped our missives into Jessica's aquarium. Again we received our tidings of her through the newspapers. There had been an uprising against the missionaries, we learned, in the settlement where our friend was staying, and several serious and unpleasant things had happened. The journals went freely into the revolting details characterizing such episodes in China, and set forth in full the experience of an American missionary and her friend, Miss Mary Hatfield, of Boston, and a Miss Henrotin, of Saint Paul, who had been saved by the devotion of a Chinese servant of the missionary. This man had fled with them before the attack began, and after a night of wandering and exposure had concealed them in an old temple until the excitement of his countrymen had subsided. I regret to chronicle that Jessica burst into hysterical giggles as she read this. She subsequently explained, wiping her eyes, that she had laughed because Tillie was safe—but deep in my own soul I experienced a sense of the ghastly humor of these recurrent futile blows of fate against a surface formerly so protected.

"Troubles come not single spies, but in battalions," quoted Jessica absently, as she again gave her attention to the story of the flight through the sodden Chinese fields, the alarms, the escapes, the nerve-racking strain of the whole experience. When she finally laid down the paper there was a very thoughtful expression on her face—the expression I knew preceded a lengthy exposition of some developing theory.

"All this will do one of two things for Tillie," Jessica began didactically. "It will kill her, or it will make her into a stunning woman. She was a nice girl, but she had no character, no backbone, no individuality, no soul—nothing but a deep-seated determination to protect her health at the expense of every human experience. She had panoplied herself with an ideal selfishness that

was humanity-proof. She avoided tests as long as she could, but they're coming now, fast and furious. She has got to stand them or go down under them. I don't know that she has a choice, but one thing is certain—if she lives through it all a new Tillie Henrotin will come back to us."

An old classmate was drinking tea with us at the time, and she and Jessica spent the next hour in an exhaustive analytical study of Tillie Henrotin's soul—the new, strong soul developing from these tragedies in Tillie's life. Jessica became very eloquent, and before she ceased talking had convinced herself and her friend that the developing process was fully under way. As the days passed I perceived also that Tillie Henrotin, the victim of a malignant fate, had taken a hold on Jessica's imagination which the Tillie Henrotin we knew had never acquired. It was Tillie's "developing soul" that appealed to Jessica, I gathered.

"Think of her different outlook," Jessica urged. "Do you imagine that one who has looked on untold horrors can regard life as she used to?"

When I murmured my practical hope that Tillie's present view held in its immediate foreground a hot footbath, a mustard-plaster and a sensible nurse, Jessica removed the light of her presence from me and strolled haughtily out of our common sitting-room; but she returned to the subject the next day. It was plain that it held an overwhelming interest for her. Unconsciously she began to construct an imaginary Tillie Henrotin—a new Tillie Henrotin—a Tillie Henrotin endowed with all the virtues, a Tillie Henrotin who was, as the slow months passed, held up to me as an object of envy—even of emulation.

"Think of how Tillie would bear it," Jessica said to me one day when I was mourning some temporary check in my career. "Think of *her* courage!"

I thought of it. It was true that I could not think of Tillie Henrotin's life as blasted by her failure to receive an official appointment for which she had applied.

"She would take it as a lesson," added Jessica solemnly, "and make this disappointment a corner-stone for the building of bigger things." It sounded like a disguised quotation from Tennyson.

I conceded that my disappointment was large enough to accommodate a substantial structure, but further than this I declined to go. I had at first reasoned with Jessica on her growing obsession, but I admit that it influenced me. It seemed very plausible that the Tillie Henrotin who had survived three tragedies must be a different woman from the scholastic butterfly we had known in the days of our youth.

Our next direct information concerning Tillie came from no less an authority than her father, Mr. David Henrotin, a member of the Stock Exchange of Saint Paul. He walked in upon us one day five years later, a tired-faced, gray-haired man, crushed by the death of his wife and the continued exile of his only daughter.

"Just got here this morning," he announced tersely, as we shook hands. "I'm sailing for Europe tomorrow. Tillie's in some scrape in Russia, and I'm going over to bring her back." He shook his head in reply to our hurried questions. "No, not sick," he went on with simple directness, as he sipped his tea, "some political trouble. It seems she's been mixing herself up with the Nihilists in some fool way; she's under arrest as a suspect."

I gasped. Jessica drew a long breath. I recognized it as a breath of rapture, though, fortunately, Mr. Henrotin did not classify it. He nodded over his tea-cup.

"That's it," he repeated slowly, "but I guess it will come out all right. I've got a lot of letters from the State Department, and I'm going over to attend to it myself."

Jessica leaned forward, her elbows on the tea-table, to the imminent danger of the cups.

"But how *stunning* of her!" she cried. "You see"—this to me, triumphantly

—"she felt she had to *do something*. She couldn't stand inactivity any longer."

Mr. Henrotin looked at my friend, his brown eyes narrowing as they studied her face.

"I guess that's right," he acquiesced. "I guess she thought she had to do something. But I guess, too, that if I get her out of this scrape she won't be inclined to do much more."

He rose as he spoke, but Jessica detained him while she poured forth her theory.

"Don't you see how different everything must look to her now?" she urged. "She's got to *do* things, she's *got* to live and help others to live. She's *got* to be with those who have lived. She can never drift again; she'd go mad if she tried it."

The father's face softened.

"She's been through a good deal," he conceded as he picked up his hat, "and she wasn't any too well fixed for such things, anyhow. But she's got to come home with me now. Then we'll see about the future."

Jessica detained him another minute.

"You won't let her go through New York without coming to see us, will you?" she begged; and Mr. Henrotin assured her that he would not.

It was three months before we got his promised message. Then it was in the form of a note from a New York hotel, informing us briefly that he and his daughter had arrived from Europe that morning, and were leaving for Chicago that afternoon. "Tillie wants you both to come to luncheon," he ended. We went. On the way Jessica outlined to me the changes we might look for in our friend.

"There won't be much left of the old Tillie," she said. "We mustn't look for that; she's been through too many things. It's—let me see—ten years since we've seen her, and it must seem ten centuries to her. She'll be hideously changed in appearance, lined and haggard, I suppose, and a nervous wreck. I didn't like the restraint of her father's note. There seemed to be

something under it—an element of mystery—”

A small youth in buttons escorted us up to the suite of rooms occupied by the Henrotins, and Mr. Henrotin opened the door when we knocked. We shook hands with him, and as we did so our eyes passed his burly figure and fixed themselves on a girl sitting by the window—a girl, young, charming, fresh, in a gown which sent us a whiff of the rue de la Paix. She held out a welcoming hand as we approached.

“Hello, you dear things,” she called cheerfully. “Awfully glad you came. Wouldn’t have missed you for the world. Don’t mind my not getting up; I’m tired. I had to do some shopping this morning and have my hair waved, and you know how that takes it out of you. I tried to get everything in Paris, but of course I forgot some things and remembered them on the steamer. We had a loathsome voyage. I was sick two days. I shall never cross at this time of the year again; it’s too much of a risk. Father, do get more comfortable chairs for the girls, and give me that footstool. I’ve never seen anything like the New York pavements; my feet were simply numb before I’d been out an hour. How do you stand it?”

All this came not rapidly or rattlingly, but in Tillie’s old, accustomed drawl—the drawl of the campus and the classroom, of the recitation and the chafing-dish supper-party. Incidentally, she had touched our cheeks lightly with her cool, soft lips. The caress was as elusive as the lighting of a bit of thistle-down. Jessica regarded her with pained surprise. I endeavored to rise to the occasion.

“It’s nice to see you looking so well, Tillie,” I said sincerely. “We were afraid that after going through so much—”

Tillie shrugged her shoulders.

“They took pretty good care of me,” she explained vaguely. “They had to, of course; they got me into the thing, so the least they could do was to get me out of it.”

Jessica’s eyes widened. She pressed forward.

“Do you mean the Russian experience?” she asked incautiously. “Didn’t you go into it as the result of conviction that you must help—do *something*—?”

“Goodness! Did you think I hadn’t had enough, so that I craved more trouble?” asked Tillie Henrotin promptly. There was no irritation in her tone, but there was a little weariness, as if she were repeating an explanation made many times before. “I didn’t know anything about it; they got me in and used me as a stool-pigeon, I suppose. You don’t suppose I’d do that sort of thing myself?” she demanded. “Why, it would be out of the question. I haven’t the strength. Father, please move my chair; and Jessica dear, would you mind drawing down that shade?”

Jessica flew to obey, for the force of habit is strong, and she had raised and lowered Tillie Henrotin’s window-shades during the entire college course of that young person. When the room was in the semi-gloom Tillie had always affected, my friend made the last stand for the preservation of her theory.

“I hope you’ve come home to stay,” she said. “You’ve been so restless and gone through so much that we were afraid you couldn’t reconcile yourself to—”

“To the quiet life of Saint Paul?” Tillie laughed. “I give you my word I’ve pined for it.” A sudden thought struck her and she leaned forward for a moment, as nearly serious as we had ever known her to be. “Why, you don’t imagine,” she went on slowly, “that I ever deliberately put myself in a position to have things happen to me, do you? I went to the desert because I thought it would be quiet; I went to China because I thought it would be quiet; I went to Russia because friends wanted me to and it was less trouble to go than to argue about it. Then when things happened, why, as they had got me into them it was their place to get me out, and of course they did. Everyone was reasonably kind. You know how devoted that Chinese serv-

ant was. Even the desert brigands were 'nice—they had to be!" She stopped a moment and then added, with perfect simplicity and good faith:

"Whenever anything happened I just told the others they'd have to be nice to me, and they were. You know I never could stand much excitement; it was always bad for me."

I dared not look at Jessica, so I turned my glance upon Mr. Henrotin. His eyes, in turn, were fixed on Jessica, with a gleam of humor in their depths.

"I guess Tillie's ready to drift a while now," he remarked generally. Tillie rose from her chair with more animation than she had yet shown.

"I'm ready to drift to luncheon," she announced; "let's go down. I simply cannot be late for meals—my health won't permit it. You know," she added, turning to Jessica and me, "I never could do it at college."

Her father opened the door for her and she passed out, dropping a handkerchief which Jessica hastened to pick up. During the little promenade to the elevator she leaned on my arm. When we entered the elevator four men rose to make room for her; in the dining-room three waiters sprang to her side. Jessica, Mr. Henrotin and I lent our united intellects to the selection of her luncheon. The atmosphere of our college days closed round us. I looked at Jessica. Jessica looked at me, and in that moment handsomely lowered her colors. To the dullest of her classmates—and Jessica was far from that—it would have been plain that Tillie Henrotin and Tillie Henrotin's soul had indeed returned to us unchanged. There was only one triumph in it—and that was to know that there was one human being who could make fate feel foolish.



HONOR

By Florence Earle Coates

DIVINE abstraction, shadowy image, dream
 More vital than substantial shapes made strong
 By all the tireless energies of wrong—
 Who should deny thy being would blaspheme
 The power that made thy loveliness supreme,
 Lending thee accents of auroral song
 To comfort those who unto thee belong—
 Though they go down to dark Cocytus' stream.

Patient as Time art thou, eternal one!
 Yet who may change thy judgments—or destroy?
 The conqueror whom wily Egypt won
 Found with life's honeyed draught a bitter blent,
 And Hector, fallen by the walls of Troy,
 Looked up and saw thy face, and was content.



MISS GUSHLEY—I like people who are always the same, don't you?
 MR. LUSHLEY—Not if they're uniformly disagreeable.

IN STATEROOM C-5

By Frank Atwater Ward

FROM the very first the two men aroused interest among their fellow-voyagers. They were always at each other's elbow as if invisibly shackled together and this fact, coupled with their aloofness from the ship's little world, sent many an inquisitive glance at John Hanthorpe and Roscoe White, as they were styled in the purser's list. What they had in common, moreover, to weld them so close was not in evidence; but the traveled nonchalance acquired by two months in Europe à la Cook is proof against too lasting interest in things trivial, so Curiosity shrugged a Gallic shoulder and buried itself in a deck-chair and an American novel.

This temporary indifference was brought to an abrupt about-face by a young man who varied the more or less monotonous life of a New York newspaper reporter by a jaunt across what he flippantly termed "the Watery Link." As he critically eyed his partner's skill at shuffleboard he remarked to his opponent:

"You know those men, Hanthorpe and White, we were all guessing about? Well, I have just figured out where it was I have seen White. I was covering the Hawley forgery case, and it was this man White who brought back Hawley from Montreal. In other words—That gives us ten! Good shot, Bostwick!—in other words, White's a detective."

"Then Hanthorpe—"

"Is some criminal, being returned to the loving arms of his native country. Just so, but he's a new one to me, face and name both. I'll try to pump White, unless the beggar remembers me."

So it came about that a battery of a few hundred eyes was turned upon Hanthorpe and White, but if they noticed it they gave no satisfaction to the curious. White refused to be "pumped" by the reporter, and this newspaper sleuth determined to send a wireless inquiry to his office as soon as the steamer's Marconi operator got in touch with land. And there the matter rested, inasmuch as it concerned the ship's company at large.

White and his companion had their deck-chairs on the less popular port side of the ship and saw to it that they were as undisturbed as undisturbing of their neighbors. It was the detective who answered every question put to the pair; Hanthorpe invariably turned to him as if shifting the burden of reply, and White always deftly included the other in answering.

A more ordinary man than the detective would have been hard to find; from plaid cap to broad-toed shoes, nothing served to single him from the ruck of the commonplace. Not so Hanthorpe, whose face, with the bewildered stare of the aroused sleep-walker, did not need the lines penciled by suffering to focus attention upon him. In general, his appearance was that of an assistant librarian or other bibliophile. Long, tapering fingers constantly played about his lips as if searching for a recently shaven mustache.

When the fog laid a thick hold upon the ship, shivering tourists sought the smoking-room or other warm, light spots where the shattering roar of the whistle was the sole reminder of outside conditions, but something stirred within Hanthorpe; a kindly veil had

been lowered between him and the world. He turned to the man sitting beside him.

"Would you mind walking for a while?" he inquired.

The detective rose without a word, and in silence they tramped the deserted decks where steamer-chairs, robbed of their rugs, yawned moistly out at the fog, until Hanthorpe paused in a corner under the captain's bridge where the steamer's sailing light cast a blood-red glow upon the enshrouding mist.

"I like it here," he said almost apologetically, "for it is so away from everything. You see nothing ahead of or behind you; you hear nothing but the snore of the seas as they strike the bow, and the hiss of anger as they are hurled back; you feel nothing but the tremble of the turbines, deadened by tons of intervening wood and steel. I can stand here looking out into the night and for the first time grasp a little of what is meant by the words Infinite and Eternal. They have always eluded my imagination, those two words."

The decks quivered as the fog-horn strained to pierce a paltry hundred yards into the vaporous blanket that smothered the groping ship. Hanthorpe's fingers drummed rapidly upon the rail that glistened redly under the side-light. Suddenly they stopped and gripped the wood.

"It's good of you, White, not to have talked about—about my crime, as they call it. No one knows the beginning of it all, what led up to and justified what I did. I am going to talk about it tonight. No, don't try to stop me. I know what I say may be used against me, but I shall plead guilty at the trial, and the rest lies with fate. And I am not speaking to you, but to someone out there"—he waved a hand toward the blankness ahead—"for I know she will be listening; my wife—" The rest of the sentence was drowned in the blast of the whistle.

"You see, I never suspected her at all; women, the best of them, have unsounded depths. She had been gone

three days when I returned from a business trip to the West, and for all I know our trains may have passed. I knew the man very slightly; he was a casual acquaintance, had been to a musical at our house, and that was about all. At that time I neither liked nor disliked him, having seen so little of him, but she, poor little thing, fluttered into the net. If she had only told me about it at the outset, all would have been well."

Neither man noticed the diapason of the steamer's voice sending forth, at three-minute intervals, its bull-throated warning into the night. The sound of laughter, mingled with the clink of glasses, drifted faintly from the smoking-room, and on the bridge overhead a muffled *stomp, stomp* told of an officer pacing at his post.

"What a pitiful note she left! It was so like a child's—a little child who had done wrong through helplessness or ignorance. I tore it up venomously and then, on my hands and knees, I gathered up the pieces, crying as only a grown man can cry. That was a hellish three months of waiting, and the memory of it eats into my brain like a corrosive acid.

"Her telegram came as a grotesque and horrible relief. She was dying, and could I come to her? Stopping neither to pack nor glance at a time-table, I ran all the way to the station, where I barely caught the St. Louis Limited; and then for ages and ages the click of the wheels was the driving of red-hot nails into my head. They were nails at first, but they grew to be of the size of posts, until at last a blessed numbness succeeded, which lasted until I reached Indianapolis, whence her telegram had come."

The fingers took up once more their tattoo upon the rail. The detective, pulling slowly at his cigar, watched his man under cover of the dim red light, weighing carefully every word the other uttered.

"It was not I who lived after that!" continued Hanthorpe; "it was some other man, and I was ever at his elbow, looking stolidly on while the drama unrolled itself. The Other Man and I

must have been one in the beginning, but later we were as two distinct individuals until—afterward. His thoughts were mine; his cold, angerless desire to kill was mine; but it was another man.

"He found her, the Other Man, in a small dirty room of a slum hotel where Stark had left her without warning and without a cent to live upon. She never regained consciousness, but died slowly, calling the name of the Other Man who was once I. The Other Man did not weep when he buried her and the—and the child; then he began the search for Stark. He was not hard to find, and the Other Man killed him with bare hands, as cold-bloodedly as one would crush vermin, but without the disgust. The Other Man had no emotions.

"The next day the Other Man and I fused again as one. This brought no surprise, only a sudden, overwhelming fear of the law, and I fled blindly, not caring whether or not there was such a thing as extradition. Sometimes I feel the Other Man slipping outside of me, as it were, and then there comes the desire to feel once more the white throat of Stark and see his evil face turn slowly purple. No other emotion, except when I am myself again, and I then wish to be through with it: the crowds at the trial; the newspapers' headlines; the solemn words of the judge; and then—Night."

The silence that ensued was broken by the detective.

"The fog has lifted," said he in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Yes, the fog has lifted," came the dull, lifeless answer.

The noises of the night were overlaid by the strokes of the ship's bell upon the bridge, echoed by the lookout high up in the crow's-nest, and in the wailing singsong of the sea came the mournful, "All's well!"

Interest among the passengers for the next three days was confined mainly to deck croquet, shuffleboard and the pools on the days' runs, until a bulletin announced that telegrams would be

accepted at the purser's office for transmission by way of Cape Race. Almost immediately the little cabin on the boat deck, abaft the saloon skylight, began to sputter and snap the messages through the air, stopping only to receive tidings from the shore. Homans, the reporter, hastened to file a wireless to his office in Park Row, and but a few hours had passed before he rushed into the smoking-room, waving a slip of paper.

"Got it!" he almost shouted to a group of three. "He's Jerome Anderson, wanted for the killing of Henry Stark in a Twenty-third street hotel last May. I covered the inquest for the *Evening Leader*. Choked him to death, Anderson did, and pinned on his chest a newspaper clipping that told of the death of Anderson's wife in Indianapolis. I must interview Hanthorpe—Anderson, I mean—or my official head falls into the city editor's basket."

Homans's head did not fall, nevertheless he did not interview Anderson, *alias* Hanthorpe. When it was noised about that Hanthorpe, of stateroom C-5, and the principal in the notorious Stark murder were one and the same man, Anderson and the detective appeared on deck only late at night, taking their meals in their room. All Homans's efforts to get at his man were promptly met by the detective, who at last threatened dire punishment if the news-hound persisted.

True to weathered custom, a "concert" was perpetrated on the last evening of the voyage. Bribing a cabin steward to report if Homans stirred from the dining-saloon, White induced his prisoner to go up on deck, where they chose a position as far removed as possible from the untrained vocal efforts that floated up through the skylights. Anderson sat for a long time gazing out to sea.

"My God, White!" he burst forth at last, "I can't stand it! It's bad enough here on the ship, but what it will be ashore, with millions to stare instead of scores, heaven alone knows. I gave you my word of honor that if you kept the handcuffs off I should not try to

jump overboard, but you must release me, White. Do you hear? You must release me, or I shall break my parole through sheer cowardice. Put on the shackles, for God's sake!"

"I have seen other men take it the same way," returned the detective evenly. "You will soon get used to it; toughen, so to speak."

"I should be sorry to get you into trouble, but if I jump they will say that you had no business to take the word of a prisoner."

"What they say is my business, not yours, Anderson; and furthermore, you are not going to break your word. No," as Anderson started to speak, "I shall not put on the shackles, as you call them; I know men, and I know you, so don't talk any more about it."

Ever since he had told the detective the story of the crime, Anderson had wondered how it had affected the quiet, unemotional man who had listened without comment and without a change in voice or manner afterward. Was he really, under the surface, as cold as he appeared, this taker of criminals, or had he been moved by the greatness of the crime which had torn a wife from a husband to send her and a newly born child to the grave? To Anderson, Stark was the criminal and himself but an avenger, under the code of the unwritten law.

Did not White see it in this light? Had he, perhaps, a wife and child who might suffer someday at the hands of a scoundrel? There was no answering these questions, and when White refused to release him from his parole the cold-blooded calmness of the detective left him completely at sea. Money, he knew, could not influence such a man. He must await the end.

On the New York dock hundreds had gathered to watch the great liner, with her litter of nosing and pulling tugs, creep slowly in. Those along the steamer's rail who had remembered to leave out their binoculars in the final packing were besieged by others who sought to identify someone in the throng on shore. Amid the waving of handkerchiefs and the hysterical

joy of home-coming, Anderson stood with unseeing eyes, White at his elbow. The detective was absorbed in watching the expression on the face of his prisoner; never had he seen such acute mental agony. It was as if the man, running the ascending gamut of emotion, had reached the pinnacle of human suffering.

Here was a man, thought White, going to a probable death at the hands of the law after encountering the stare of a million morbid eyes; a man of a naturally shrinking, sensitive temperament, who in a moment of madness for which the law made no allowance, had wreaked vengeance upon the slayer of his wife and child. He would suffer worse than a thousand deaths before the black cap shut out a view of the world, and if a life sentence were "mercifully" extended, would live a daily hell until death laid its numbing hand upon him. In sharp contrast White pictured his own home-coming when he had delivered his charge to the New York authorities. A motherly woman with two wee tots clinging to her skirt would rush to the door of the homey little house in the Long Island suburb. . . .

"We had better get below after our bags," he said sharply to the man at his side, who turned and followed as one in a trance.

In the stateroom White suddenly became as fidgety as an old woman.

"I know I have forgotten to pack my medicine-case. It's not in this; I'll look in the suit-case under the berth." And the detective turned his back upon the valise, lying open upon a little table.

It was criminal carelessness for a man like White to leave a Colt's .45 revolver in plain sight in the open valise, but he seemed unmindful of his error as he bent over, fumbling in the suit-case. His hands moved mechanically and, if his nerves were not known to be of steel, one would have said that his fingers were twitching. A click, as of a revolver being cocked, made him grip the side of the suit-case until the veins in his hands stood out like

tense cords. From miles away came the rasp of the gang-plank and the shuffle of moving feet. A drop of perspiration fell loudly upon his cuff. He could stand the suspense no longer, and slowly, very slowly, straightened up.

In the mirror, he saw Anderson with the muzzle of the revolver against his temple. Seconds passed with the drag of hours. Would the man ever shoot?

Slowly Anderson lowered the weapon, and, carefully letting down the hammer,

replaced it in the valise; then he stood erect, with the look of a conqueror on his face. A dull red ring upon his temple showed where the muzzle of the revolver had pressed. White wheeled swiftly. Mechanically Anderson took the extended hand which crushed his fingers as in a vise. Twice the detective tried to speak, and when he did so his voice sounded harsh and unnatural.

"Come, we must be getting ashore," said he.



A RETROSPECT

By Rex H. Lampman

MY boyhood lies far, far away
Down the dim road of Yesterday,
Yet oft the heart within me cries
For just one glimpse of those glad skies,
Of that lost time when hearts were gay.

What joyous, care-free days were they!
What merry games we used to play!
I gaze back where—ah! how time flies—
My boyhood lies.

So now, my temples streaked with gray,
I sit and dream of lifetime's May,
As Memory old Time defies;
Though smiling, I cannot despise
Those master fictions of their day—
My boyhood lies.



A MODERN ANANIAS

WHAT makes me seem a liar is my modesty, forsooth,
It shocks me so to state bare facts or speak the naked truth.

A. W. C.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

By Sidney Fredericks

BRAINERD, the new man in French at Selwyn College, had been dining with his chief and at ten he got up to go.

"Yes, I'm afraid you'll find it rather quiet," said Professor Atkins. "This little town will be a change from what you've known at Yale. We live pretty much to ourselves here; and being a denominational college, of course our outlook isn't as wide as it might be. Was it Jack London who called professors 'the unburied dead'? Sometimes I think that's almost true of us here."

"Nonsense," said his wife, who had risen with the guest and was standing by her husband, her hands clasped about his arm in an attitude of wifely devotion. "Nonsense. Are you trying to frighten Mr. Brainerd at the beginning?" And then turning to the young man she added, "We have a quiet, home town here; but we're really very nice and comfortable, and we enjoy ourselves. We've some nice girls here, too; so perhaps you'll find a wife among us."

"Now don't begin that," warned her husband. "I'm only telling him so that he won't expect too much. Things are quiet, but I hope you'll find enough to keep you awake."

"No fear," laughed Brainerd. "I like quiet, and I'm going to like Selwyn, I know." He stood for a moment smiling at the pleasant little picture which the man and wife made, then shook hands and turned toward the door.

"You didn't bring an umbrella?" said his host, sniffing at the damp air. "Don't you want one?"

"It feels a little like rain, but I guess I can get home before it begins, thank you. Good night."

The door shut and Brainerd stepped out into the green-black shadow of the maples which were ranked on the sidewalk. He took a minute to get his bearings and then set off at a brisk pace. He was in one of the better residence streets of the town, where the comfortable houses had their little yards, with trees and shrubbery; and this mass of foliage helped to heighten the blackness of the night.

Far ahead he could see the spot of a small street lamp, which became a misty glow of whitish yellow in the green night as he approached it, and left the green blacker as he passed beyond the narrow circle of its radiance. The air was heavy with moisture, and there was an oppressive sense of desertion about the place. On such a night Leander would have imagined monsters in the Hellespont; and even the calm Brainerd walked as rapidly away from the darkness behind as the darkness in front permitted.

For several blocks the street maintained its residential character; then the houses became few and scattering. The young man had a feeling of unfamiliarity, but not until he descended a hill and reached a railway crossing did he see his mistake. On leaving the house he had come in the wrong direction; he was hurrying away from his lodgings instead of toward them, and had emerged into the poorer quarter near the railroad.

He was about to retrace his steps when a drop of rain struck his hand and emphasized the necessity for haste. At

the same time he remembered that the railroad went through the town in a half-circle, and that if he followed the track for a couple of blocks he would strike the station and the trolley line. From there he might get a car in the direction he wished to go.

This brought him to a new decision and he turned quickly into the street, through the centre of which ran the track. The houses in it were mostly small and built of wood. At intervals he passed the grim, unilluminated fronts of stores, and twice the half-doors of a saloon sent a splash of light across his path.

At the first corner was a gas-lamp, and as he neared this a cab clattered up and stopped just ahead of him. The opportunity to ride seemed providential, and he was hurrying toward the vehicle when the door opened and a man stepped out.

For the space of a leaf's turning his face was under the rays of the lamp and Brainerd gave a start of surprise in recognizing him. It was Wallace, the professor of Greek. The new instructor had been introduced to him at a faculty meeting the night before, and he was a man whom once seen was not easily forgotten; for he had the rare, and not necessarily desirable, quality in a man of being handsome to a degree that might almost be called beauty. He was tall and splendidly formed, with a face that was Greek in outline except that he wore a silky brown beard, trimmed close, and at times spoiled the line of his profile by a pair of rimless eye-glasses.

Now, Brainerd knew no particular reason why Wallace should not be where he was; at the same time, it caused him a moment of wonder to see a colleague getting out of a cab at that hour and in that quarter. His curiosity was just sufficient to make him slacken his pace.

The cabman drove off and Brainerd hung fire between an impulse to speak and the reflection that he barely knew the man, and that it was a time when there was no great necessity for thrusting himself forward.

Wallace relieved him of a decision; for without pausing to look back he walked off rapidly, with the air of one perfectly familiar with his ground. For a block he kept just ahead of the younger man, then turned into a small, alley-like street, and, crossing it, ascended the steps of an unlighted building and entered. The lamp on the corner enabled Brainerd to see this much of his movements; and on a huge sign which projected from the front of the building he read, "Antonio Carnivale, Fruits."

The place was apparently deserted.

All this Brainerd took in as he walked past the corner. He did not stop, but he cast away the indifference required by politeness and frankly acknowledged that he was curious. It did—it really did seem strange. Of course his colleague might have come into that part of town for fruits; but why did he not drive up to the door in the cab; or why did he enter an apparently tenantless shop? Brainerd asked himself these questions as he crossed the street; but he found no answer.

On the whole he decided that it was just as well that he had not spoken. Wallace was probably more comfortable. Thus do men play the Samaritan in a modern way by closing their eyes and passing by on the other side.

But the thing was not to end so; Brainerd was in the middle of the next block when two figures moved out of the shadow of a doorway and jostled into his path. He was a big man, and if he could see what he was fighting he wasn't afraid; but the possibility of a hold-up flashed across his mind as one of the men brushed against him and looked closely into his face.

The college man balanced himself on the ball of his foot and drew back. In another second the fellow, who was an Italian, would have received a blow on the point of the jaw that would have made him an astronomer for two minutes. He saved himself by stepping back quickly with a "Pardon, signore," to the young man, and a swift aside to his companion. Low as were the

words, Brainerd caught and understood them. He had once spent a Winter in Sicily, and now it amazed him to hear one man say to the other in the Sicilian dialect: "It is not he. He has escaped us."

"He is at Antonio's by now," was the reply. "We will wait for him."

"Pardon, signore," they said again in English, and moved off.

Out of the corner of his eye Brainerd was sure he saw one of them conceal something under his coat—something that, for the barest instant, glittered. He moved on, too; but at the end of a dozen steps he came to a pause. "He is at Antonio's by now," he repeated.

That could mean nobody but Wallace. What did they want of him? It might be none of his business, but Brainerd swung round. The men had turned the corner toward Antonio Carnivale's store. The Yale man felt the sudden call to battle that impels youth to go into a fight whether it has any reason for being there or not. But he thought he had a reason. He was a sportsman. Two men were waiting for one, and that one was of his own class and kind. It didn't make any difference what the merits of the case were; he was going to get into trouble, and it was the younger college man's duty to meddle far enough to see what was about to occur and whether he was needed.

He walked swiftly and silently back to the cross-street. Peering around the corner he noticed two figures slouching behind a pile of empty fruit-crates on the sidewalk opposite the store.

Brainerd measured the distance with his eye; then he sauntered out leisurely, whistling. The men made no move and he reached the shop and went up the steps. The door opened to his hand and he found himself in a long, dark room. At the opposite end was a rough plank door outlined by feeble streaks of light which sifted round its edges from some place behind.

He paused for a breath to get his bearings and, as his eyes grew accustomed to the light, he made out barrels against the walls and boxes piled

in rows down the room. Strange, dark bodies hung suspended from the ceiling, gruesome in their suggestiveness, but proving to be only harmless bunches of bananas which imparted a sort of green, fruity perfume to the close air.

Brainerd moved among them toward the threads of light which marked the door. As he paused before it he heard the murmur of voices, and he had a final moment of doubt as to the wisdom of his procedure. He knew that he would look extremely silly if he should burst in upon strangers. Or suppose Wallace was there, and some quiet commonplace explanation should be offered for it all? He could but take the risk; so he knocked.

An instant hush fell. Behind the panels Brainerd could imagine startled people looking questioningly at each other. He knocked again more peremptorily. There was a sound of shuffling feet; then a woman's voice asked, "Who is it?"

"Is James Wallace there? I'm a friend."

Silence for a minute; whispering; more movement of feet; then the door opened a crack and a small, white-haired old man, an Italian, peered out.

"Mr. Wallace is not here," he said, but he glanced uncertainly over his shoulder and shuffled as he spoke.

Then Brainerd knew that the old man was lying, and that, even if he had made a mistake in coming, he would find Wallace in the room. "I am Mr. Brainerd," he said, speaking up for the benefit of the invisible man, "and I come as Mr. Wallace's friend. Will he see me?"

Somebody moved; there was a murmur inside.

"Let him in, Antonio," said the quiet voice of the professor of Greek.

It was a large room, in very sharp contrast to the shop in front. There was an atmosphere of ease and comfort about it that one would scarcely have foreseen from the appearance of the outside of the house. There were rugs on the floor and a few pictures on the walls. There was a comfortable couch, and several chairs; in the middle of the

room was a mahogany table upon which were magazines and a large, shaded lamp. Wallace sat by it, his eye-glasses in his fingers, his blue eyes peering uncertainly toward the visitor.

But what startled Brainerd was the woman! She stood behind the table, just touched by the circle of light—a single figure hemmed in by shadows, like a portrait by Rembrandt; a girl with the opulent, deep-bosomed beauty of a woman. Her loose-bundled hair was dark; her eyes were dark; but her skin was like ivory with a rose tinge, and her naked, satin arms gleamed white as she rested her hands on the table's edge and leaned forward expectantly.

As Brainerd's eyes touched hers he felt the powerful tropic quality of her beauty—the invitation of her full lips, the caress in her long-lidded eyes. His carefully prepared speech fled from him. "I beg your pardon," he stammered.

"Well?" Wallace's voice interrogated sharply.

The other faced him and pulled himself together. "I am Brainerd, the new man in French," he prefaced. "I don't know if you remember me?"

Wallace nodded that he did.

"I don't intend to intrude, but I felt it right to come and tell you that I believe somebody is following you. Quite by accident I saw you come in here. Then two men passed me, and from what I caught of their talk I decided that they were looking for you. They are waiting outside for somebody. Perhaps it isn't you they are seeking, but one of them had a knife, and you see, since it looked so suspicious I didn't dare take the risk of not warning you. I hope you'll understand"—his eyes sought the girl—"that I didn't intend to butt in; but if you are in danger—"

The others were not heeding him. He had apparently hit a nail. The old man dropped a curse; the girl's eyes darkened with apprehension as she laid a hand on the seated man's shoulder. "It is Luigi," she murmured.

"He is jealous," put in the old man. "They are waiting for you."

"He is a fool," said Wallace.

"But he will kill you," protested the girl. "Will you never understand? When we love, we love, and when we hate, we hate."

The old Italian stepped over quickly and locked the little door leading to the shop.

"I thought if there was going to be a fight," pursued Brainerd, "I wouldn't leave you to go it alone. But I hope you understand—"

Wallace got up and put out a hand.

"I understand, and it was mighty good of you. You went out of your way to help me just on the chance. That's more than many men would have done. I'll be on my guard."

For a second there was that strained silence which comes of misunderstanding, of doubt. A thousand questions were crowding into Brainerd's head, but he had no reason for putting them. Wallace's tone had been one of dismissal.

But the girl touched him on the arm. "You must go by the rear door," she said. "I will let you out."

"Wait," interrupted Wallace. "You have tried to help me; it's only fair to both that you understand more." Then, turning to the other two he said, "Will you leave me and Mr. Brainerd alone for a little?"

"You will not go by the front way?" the girl demanded passionately.

"We won't go," said Wallace, and, indicating a chair, he waited until the old man and the girl had gone out by a rear door.

"You think this looks queer," he said finally, "and since you've seen this much I must tell you everything and trust you to keep my secret."

"I beg your pardon, but I am not asking an explanation. I came only because I thought I must."

"But you've already formed opinions from the appearance of things?"

"I suppose one can't help that."

"Precisely. Therefore, it's better to tell you the truth. Of course, what you have come on by accident you will

hold in confidence. Well, you are probably right in what you are thinking. The story is much the same as it looks, only, from my point of view, it is not so sordid. I am in love with Maria Carnivalli. In a week I am going to cut loose from all my life here and go away with her. As soon as possible I shall make her my wife. One of the men whom you saw was her lover. He is jealous, but without reason. He never had a claim on her. The other fellow who is with him, is, I suppose, some friend. Antonio is afraid they will harm me, but I don't fear them. Right is all on my side, and in a week I shall be beyond their reach."

Brainerd nodded. He wanted to say something, but the frankness of the man took away his words.

"You probably think it queer that a man in my position should come to this; but if you knew everything you would understand. I hope life here will never grow as unbearable to you as it has to me."

"Unbearable? Do you mean—?"

"I mean everything."

"You are in trouble?"

"Not in the way you mean it. I'm simply desperate. I'm tired. For fifteen years I've been grinding here. For what? To teach young fools, who don't care for it, a language that has been dead two thousand years; to teach it to men and women who forget it the year after. At first I had plenty of interest in my work. But where did it lead? I was dealing with dead things. I dried up. To all intents and purposes I was dead. Yes, Brainerd, we're all dead here. The worst of it was that I knew it, and I began to hate my life and myself. I wanted movement and action. And then she came." He paused and his eyes glowed brilliantly behind his glasses. He looked toward the door. "*She* wakened me. *She* is a live woman. *She* has a mind and a body. I've found that there are real people in the world, people who do things. I'm going to do things too, or fail. But failure will be better than this playing at life."

Brainerd stared. The situation was

most unusual. The man seemed mad. Probably he was only infatuated.

"You're young," went on Wallace. "Don't take my word for it. You believe in these things now. Go on believing in them; but pray heaven to give you other interests against the day when books turn to dust and ashes. If I had had those—"

Brainerd shifted in his chair. "But why run away in secret?" he asked. "Surely you have the right to do as you wish with your life."

It was the older man who started now. Then he said quietly, "I see that perhaps you do not know that I—that I am married."

With the word light broke in. Brainerd understood the man's eagerness for explanation. He was defending himself against his own condemnation of himself. And the younger man was suddenly conscious that their positions were reversed. He was no longer the intruder. To Wallace he represented society, and Wallace felt that he must justify himself.

Suddenly, too, he was sorry for the other. Perhaps there was something to be said on his side.

"Your wife?" Brainerd's question came finally. He put it with great gentleness, as if afraid to hurt Wallace, yet feeling that he had a right to ask it.

Wallace let his eyes fall to the carpet. "If that were right I suppose I'd be content to go on as a dry-as-dust. Only then I wouldn't be one. That saves a man."

"Is it not your fault?"

Wallace leaned over. "Some time in your life," he said, "you may be tempted to marry for money. I didn't exactly do that; but I married money. It meant leisure and opportunity to pursue my studies. But I found it meant other things, too. It meant living in a house that your wife had built for you; it meant living on a scale above your earnings, so that you had a horrible sense of dependence. It meant being constantly reminded of the fact that your house and your carriage and your holidays were not your own, but your wife's. It meant that you need

not worry about the wolf, but that you ought not to hold opinions opposite to your wife's father. It read freedom at a distance, but it spelt bondage at the end."

"Your children?" came back Brainerd.

"I haven't any," said Wallace simply.

"But you can't be going to throw up everything this way. Think of your good name, your honor—"

The older man looked at him with a small smile on his lips, a smile, however, that was saved from cynicism by a sadness of his eyes.

"*Si jeunesse savait*," he quoted. "What is a good name except what gossips have agreed to repeat? And is it not more honorable to be open in one's break than to live a double life? Don't you see that the girl is all I have? She has made me live again. She is the only person in the world with whom I can find peace—and love."

He spoke with extraordinary earnestness, but his sentence was given a sudden period by a light tap on the door leading to the storeroom.

Both men started. At the same instant the door leading to the back part of the house opened and the girl advanced quickly.

"Luigi is trying to get in," she whispered. "You must come this way at once."

Wallace demurred. "We may as well see him now. He will not dare be violent. Perhaps I can buy him off."

Maria shook her head. "You do not understand," she declared. "Signore," she pleaded, turning to Brainerd, "they will kill him. Make him go with you. I will meet them."

She laid her hand on Wallace's arm, and her voice was urgent, appealing. She cared for Wallace—that was beyond a doubt. And, as he looked at her, Brainerd could understand a little how Wallace had come under her spell. She was the incarnation of youth; she came upon the senses like the warm wind of the South, like the odor of clematis blossoms on still Summer nights.

"Come," she insisted.

But even as they prepared to obey there was a sound of hurried footsteps in the store, and a heavy body lurched against the plank door. The lock snapped, the door swung inward with a bang, and two Italians stumbled into the room.

The taller, and the leader, recovered himself and walked over to Wallace, who stepped forward to face him.

"So I find you here!" he said in a tone of mock politeness accompanied by an almost deferential bow.

"What do you want?"

"You know well enough."

"Can't we fix this, Luigi? There's no good in your acting so. She is here to choose for herself. Ask her."

"You have hypnotized her," snarled the man, "and you have bought her father. He is a traitor to his people."

"Go away," said the girl. "What he says is true. I do not love you; you are mad to think I would."

"No, *you* are mad," said the man, and advanced a step toward Wallace.

Brainerd shoved forward, and grasped a small chair. He knew they were in for it, and though he would gladly have got away, there was nothing to do but to stand by his friend. "See here, old chap," he said to the Italian; and his lazy, affected college drawl seemed a strange note in that atmosphere, "we don't want a scrap, but if you try any monkey business, you'll get *one*."

Deceived by his placating tone the man addressed barely glanced at him. He drew back a pace and, for a moment, Brainerd fancied that he was going to withdraw. But with an electrically quick movement he plucked out a knife which hung by a cord round his neck, and sprang at Wallace.

Brainerd was taken off his guard and his interference was delayed. He swung the chair, but missed, and it splintered into a dozen pieces on the floor.

The Italians were not so deceived, and, even as the man leaped, the girl thrust herself in front of him. The knife, which was intended for Wallace, caught her wrist. At the same mo-

ment the old man darted out of the rear room and seized the assailant. A thread of silver light seemed to play at the tips of his fingers. Luigi stumbled; the blood gushed from a stiletto wound in his throat; he groped uncertainly toward Wallace; then his arm dropped, and he collapsed in a crumpled heap on the floor.

Brainerd recovered his equilibrium just in time to engage the second man, who waited till his friend struck, and then ran in. A blow in the face made him stagger, but his knife slit the college man's sleeve. He came on again fiercely, and Brainerd broke ground a step to watch his chance for a blow.

It was never delivered. A revolver barked. In the closed room the shot roared and reëchoed like the explosion of a cannon. The Italian recoiled as sharply as he had from the blow of the fist, but this time there was no recovery. The knife clattered from his hands. For a second he supported himself against the wall, then slid to his knees and toppled forward on his face. Brainerd turned to see the old man with a smoking weapon in his hand.

Maria screamed and wrenched away from Wallace, who was trying to examine her arm. A thin, blue smoke filled the room. On the table the lamp, unshaken by the scuffle, burned with a sort of ironical calmness. The smoke made Brainerd cough, and he had a dazed feeling, as of a man who had just had the breath beaten out of him in a football scrimmage. Vaguely he heard the girl protesting to Wallace, "It is nothing, only a scratch."

There followed a moment of absolute silence while the actors looked at one another and at the bundles on the floor. Then like a doom-call came the sound of a policeman's night-stick beating on the pavement outside. Brainerd came to his senses. "Wallace," he shouted, "we must get out of this place."

The old Italian ran forward, shut the door and wedged a chair against it. "Go by the back way," he pointed. "You need have no fear; I will ar-

range it. We will say they killed each other."

He rushed about, setting the stage for the scene he intended. He thrust his warm revolver into Luigi's hand; then jerking open the drawer of the table he pulled out a deck of cards which he scattered on top.

Maria opened the door and pushed Wallace out before her. "Hurry," she ordered.

Outside the policeman's night-stick had ceased to tap, and they heard men feeling their way through the fruit-store.

Brainerd went out, closing the door softly behind him. A hand felt for his in the darkness and the girl's warm, pliant fingers clasped his own. She led them silently up a stairway and along a narrow hall to a window. It was open to the night and they could discern dimly the flat, black roof of a shed just beneath. The rain was falling heavily; it made an incessant humming noise on the shingles and the mist from the broken drops sprayed their hands.

"You must get out there and lie still till they have gone. They will not look for you. You can trust my father."

Obeying without parley Brainerd let himself out, and, edging away from the window, flattened himself down on the roof. He heard the other two whispering for a moment, then Wallace joined him and the sash closed so noiselessly that no one not within two yards of the place would have noticed it.

Silence reigned except for the murmurous talk of the rain upon the roof. It was broken by the rattle of a wagon in the street; they heard voices, and the house beneath echoed to many footsteps. A door opened below them and the back-yard was illumined. From his recumbent position Brainerd could see a muddy garden cut off from the alley by a high board fence and some sheds. Then the door closed, the footsteps retreated, and the night fell black and silent again.

Lying there, his garments soaking up the rain, and grimed by bits of moldering wood, Brainerd suddenly found himself on the verge of laughter.

The whole thing was as comic as it was uncanny. It was like an Arabian Night. He had read of such things happening to adventurers in Oriental cities, but this was a staid little college town where Mrs. Atkins had said that "nothing ever happened." He pictured that lady with her hands clasped round the arm of her husband as she had bade him good-bye an hour ago. He had smiled at her words and had steeled himself to dulness, and here he was already hiding from the police and publicity. It was like an Arabian Night, and it was like—a farce. Tomorrow morning, if they got away, Wallace would hear a class in Greek, and he would try to teach a dozen youngsters to pronounce French according to the phonetic system. "There are more things, Horatio," he reflected sagely, and turned to speak to Wallace.

Half-an-hour later the two men were hugging the dark sides of the streets on their way home. They scarcely exchanged a word till at last Wallace stopped before an old-fashioned brick house.

"This is my place," he said, as he put out his hand. "I'm sorry you got into this, but I thank you. I think it would perhaps be better if we did not refer to the matter again. Let this night be wiped out of memory. Of course I count on your keeping your own counsel. I feel sure that we are safe. Nothing of the real truth will leak out. Antonio can be trusted."

"See here," burst out Brainerd, gripping him. "Give it up, old chap. You can't mean to keep up this sort of thing?"

"Give it up when you saw what she did for me? I can't. Don't you see, man, she's all I have!"

"But it won't last; you'll be sorry."

"It has lasted," said Wallace. "Suppose, as I suggested, we consider this night wiped out. Then you will not have me on your conscience. Good night." The tone was so final that the young man could do nothing but go.

Brainerd went to sleep in his bathrobe in his easy-chair at two o'clock in the morning. He awakened five hours later with a vague feeling that he had dreamed the events of the night before. But his clothes were dirty, and the morning paper had an account of two Italians who had killed each other in a quarrel over a card game.

Later in the day he met Wallace on the campus with another professor. The former hailed him and asked him to serve on the entertainment committee for a "social" to be given the new students. He also apologized for not having called on Brainerd, but assured him that he was going to do so at once.

The instructor left him more puzzled than ever. He thought it over for a day and a night, and picked up enough to convince him that Wallace's hints about his home life were not overdrawn. He had an idea that Wallace was crazy; but he could see no clear duty in the matter, and if he talked to anybody he must implicate himself in the affair of the fruit-shop. So he took refuge in a German proverb about "no flies entering a shut mouth," and sat down to wait for the rest of the story to happen, as he knew it inevitably would.



A SUBSTITUTE

FIRST SUBURBANITE—I hear that the managers of this road are thinking of carrying passengers free.

SECOND SUBURBANITE—You don't say!

,"Yes; just going to charge them a moderate freight on the packages."

GOSSAMER GLORY

By Mrs. Henry Dudeney

I

NIGHT

THEY met by accident on the step; met in a mystery made by Summer dusk and the shadow of the stately door. They were always meeting and always by honest accident on this step—it was piquant, it was elusive and vague, the neighborly meeting; it stirred the heart and pulse.

To meet is inevitable when you lodge in the same house; but what is a mere disquieting jostle of shoulders between folk who are alien becomes a romantic incident, to be looked for and hoarded up, when you are kin—with youth; moreover, with a something which you have not yet defined.

The house stood in a narrow London street which turned off from a roaring wide one; a magnificent house, in the very midst of a quarter which had once been aristocratic and was now frankly vagabond. People in various degrees of vulgarity, despair, gaiety and struggle huddled beneath rich ceilings and clattered down stairways which long ago had swished faintly to brocade.

They were a mixed company in the old house; a lawyer in shady practice on the ground floor; beneath him, in the basement, a caretaker with a brood of children; above him all sorts of human shades. There were two girls, said to be minor actresses, and they had a canary which sang all day long—provoking melancholy or madness, or both, in the breasts of all the other lodgers. There were a married couple with a first baby. The wife was a pretty

young slip of a thing, with a thin face and a tendril dusk of black hair. Her husband was ugly, as men of his sort always are. He went off early to the city each morning on a motor omnibus. There was such a difference between these two, although at present they were most devoted, that one imagined the little, pensively spiritual wife would some day get sick of the ugly husband, and then her heart would break—for she was not the mold of woman who would first break his.

There were others in this magnificent and tarnished old house; an elderly man who drank—a little, and played the fiddle—more. He was a broken genius. There was a very devout old maid who spent her days in the big church round the corner; she was credited with romance, as every well-regulated old maid is; the difference in her case was that tradition weaved in scandal—yet nobody could be sure. Certain it was that she was irreproachable now; probably that was why they all suspected her. There was a fat and well-dressed widow—the widow, so she said, of a jeweler in the Strand, who had been “a perfect gentleman.” She stood at her window all day long watching everyone who passed up and down the street, and she kept opera-glasses all ready on a round table in the recess. It was a deep recess, and the window was high and dignified, with lots of little panes set in heavy wooden moldings. The widow's life was spent in digging for delicate scandals, and when she thought she had found one she carried it down immediately to the rooms of the pensive young married woman and they virtuously

agreed that Stephen street was no fit place for persons of unblemished reputation; the young married woman was inordinately prudish—for the present!

There was Miles Roborow in a top room close beneath the gabled red roof—in which he sang with the canary all the time. There was, also, Laura Court; she lived with a stone-deaf uncle, and he was a worker in metal. Miles knew all his fellow-lodgers by sight and some of them by an occasional "good morning." Speech was always surly—on his part. How could it be otherwise when he knew himself to be so far removed from these people—he who was going to be a very great man indeed?

He stood on the step tonight with Laura Court; stood in the magic of June dusk and the shelter of the richly carved portico. The houses in Stephen street were stately; it was a street that in certain aspects—say with moonlight streaming—fetched sighs from the sentimental. It had been so gay, so witty, so enchantingly sinful and elegantly opulent, this old street, and now it was so sordid. Yet the big, over-crowded houses remained haughty; they were like a proud woman who, betrayed, broken, yet displays a fine carelessness to her observant world.

The insidious fragrance of June, unquenchable even in cities, spread in this street of architectural embroideries. Nothing could keep it out, the June mood—of roses, green gardens and meadows ardently trembling for the scythe. This fragrance—of Summertime—laughed high above the earnest heads of the two upon the step. And yet the street was heavy with ugly odors; of beer from the public-house at the corner, of fruit and flesh and fish from the stalls and shops in the wide road on which Stephen street debouched. This sweet June smell was a veritable triumph of spirit over matter. An all unconscious admission of this made wise the eyes of the man and the girl as they flashed at each other through dusk, just meeting by the way.

There is always a girl and a man—just as there is always the perfume of June—in every year. The Junes are

very much alike, and so are the lovers; the charm lies in the absurd, sweet fallacy that they believe themselves to be so utterly different. It is a brand-new pageant every time; never a kiss nor a perfume once before.

"Good evening," said Miles, lifting his straw hat.

"Good evening, Mr. Roborow," she sighed.

She looked tired; she looked something else also—haggard, yet uplifted. She had one of those enchanting plain little faces that easily transform.

"It must be lovely in the country," she added, and flushed—they had never spoken before, save to say just "Good evening."

This is hardly speech, but merely a polite mechanism of the tongue, which wags by itself without the prompting of a soul. "June is the pick of the year in the country, Miss Court."

"I suppose so"—she stared at a sky of smoke and rose—"but I have never been out of London since I was so high." She spread her hand and lowered it toward the bare old boards and looked up and laughed at him.

"When I was five," she went on fluently, "they took me to a place near Epping Forest for a fortnight. My uncle often tells me about it, for I can't remember. But the real country is one of those things you know by instinct. I have it all in my head—hay-making and the cuckoo."

"Hay-making is hot work, and as for the cuckoo, he is unmusical; all birds are."

"You must talk about music to Mr. Price." She nodded toward the stairs and the rooms of the drunken genius. "As for birds, why, I like even the canary which—"

"The actresses' canary? I shall sneak in some day and wring its yellow neck."

"Actresses!" there was sudden venom in her silver laugh. "They are only in the chorus; they are nothing but eyes and legs."

"Shall we take a stroll in the Gardens of Marlowe's Inn?" said Miles courteously. He was steadily regarding her; he saw something in the light

of her face tonight which made for mystic union; this was perhaps a comrade.

"If—if you like, Mr. Roberrow."

They went down Stephen street and crossed the wide, crowded road—to clanging bells and rushing cars and tumbling children. In these few paces, out of the narrow street into the wide one, they bridged two centuries. The observant widow watched them go; she trundled downstairs to her neighbor, the little wife, at once.

The girl was bathing her baby and held him naked in her arms; she looked like a living lily.

"I always said it was bound to come to that," panted the widow, pointing to the window. "Two young people always passing on the stairs."

The Gardens of the Inn of Court were stately—with Stephen street; the Benchers threw them open to the public on Summer evenings. Miles and Laura passed in, skirting a little lodge gay with geraniums—it was a squat lodge and seemed more of red flowers than roof tonight, in the large June haze.

Women and children were on the grass. On three sides of the Gardens rose dignified houses, as those in Stephen street on the fourth was a twisted railing of wrought iron. It broke in delicate spires and screened off an intrusive world. Beneath this railing, just within, grew elm-trees, and beneath them there ran a wide path brightly graveled. The two, without a word, went and walked along this path—to learn history of the soul. They were in solitude; everyone else was on the grass. For the present they were strangers, their only bond a common roof.

"I've lived all my life in the country," said Miles in his patronizing way, "so this sort of thing," letting a scornful eye rove through the ancient trees in their academic robes of new green, "is nothing to me."

"Tell me about the country. I'm in a shop, you know; one of the biggest in Oxford street. Sometimes it pleases

me to pretend that the artificial flowers in the boxes are real; you'll think me very childish."

"Not at all," he said politely, and looked at her. Her abundant hair was pale brown and her skin was of that pallid cream—a pathetic delicacy—of the little shop-girl. As for her eyes, he could not understand them. He almost thought they must be asking for the very same thing that he kept asking for. Yet would not that be too—absurd!

"There isn't anything—to tell," he continued. "The country is just—cattle; four legs and two. People eat and sleep, they live and die—as oxen."

"But the trees and the birds?"

"They are just—the drop scene," he said grandly.

He was very young and he carried all the tokens of his kind; that is to say, he was a small tradesman's son and a human sport. Categorically, you would tie him up in a bundle with a blue rose and a white blackbird. Sometimes these fervid people of the lower middle class break their bonds and burn with splendor—they become persons of mark. Yet far more often they break their hearts and commit suicide, because suicide is at least a means of notoriety.

"Oh, the theatre!" said Laura Court in a seductive, floating sort of way. "That is better than the country, of course; there is no ambition in the country."

Miles, at this, stood stock-still on the path; his heart was suddenly beating very fast—with ardor, with terror, with jealousy? He saw that his fellow-lodger's cheek was flushed and that there was a forked secret playing in her eye. His secret! Deep within them they dangled that same darling—Ambition. It was of design, then, that they walked in the Gardens tonight. The gods were subtle and were kind!

"Ambition!" he breathed—with reverence; it was such a boundless word.

She flung her arms out.

"It isn't—living," she whispered in

a biting way, "just to serve behind a counter in the daytime and at night to come home to a stone-deaf uncle, is it?"

Miles thought she looked impressive, standing with her long arms spread and her small burning face flung high on a smooth lean throat. But he would not trouble to tell her so; it was not a moment for compliments, nor was he the man.

"You feel like that, too?" he asked helplessly.

"Of course; but I don't talk—it is too sacred a matter. Yet to you, tonight; I—I don't know. It seems different, although we are strangers."

"We are the closest friends that can be," he assured her, "because I also have ambition and it is too sacred to speak of—or has been until tonight."

He moved along the path, they moved together, keeping happy step. It was inevitable. They were comrades. They were more to each other than to anyone else.

"Tonight," Laura said, "I was dying to talk, because my—my chance has come. Do you understand?"

"Tell me," he said quietly, and nodding.

He was rather carried away by her feverish brilliance, by the glamour of those stars, her eyes—in short, she was a girl and he was a man. Yet he never for one moment lost sight of the indubitable fact that her career, whatever it was, would be many, many planes beneath his. This must be. And he did not wish to make love to her; he never thought of it, since, for the great artist, Love—was not. He felt dimly, however, that he would certainly kill her, should she prove to be the bigger artist of the two. But this was—incredible! He burst out laughing and she stared.

"Go on," he said gently. "Don't mind me."

She began to tell; it was a rapid little chipper-chipper and reminded him of busy sparrows.

"I'm going on the stage; I'm sure I can make a name. I've personality—and that's the whole battle. I'm

plain, for one thing; if I were pretty and pink, with a splendid set of teeth, I should only do for light comedy and the picture postcards. I despise that sort of thing; it isn't true Fame."

"Fame!" shivered Miles.

"I want to take serious parts, problem parts and—and my chance has come—I'm going on tour in the provinces; the caretaker in Stephen street will look after uncle, and I shall of course throw up my berth at the shop. I went to see the dramatic agent on my way home from business tonight; I go every night and he's got something for me at last. It is a little part; you just walk on—with others. But one must begin at the bottom of the ladder; all the big actresses have worked their way up."

She ceased, and instantly there was a pause, a strain, a subtle coldness. Each caught the other staring. She was thinking that he had steadfast eyes and a grim jaw; he, that she was a pale brown thing, the color of cinnamon, a frail little creature that a man might crumple up. Fancy Ambition burning at that bit of a shrine!

"Some day we shall be great—together," he said solemnly. "We'll placard London, between us."

"Are you going on the stage, too?"

"The stage! I shall sing in opera. I shall be the tenor of my time."

He suddenly burst through the proud emotional palisading which hedged him. He began to talk. Wasn't it an outburst! Words poured out of him—as again they stood stock-still, this man and this girl, beneath the grinning green trees. Laura had never heard anyone talk so much and so fast. He talked with his tongue, with his eyes, with his hands; the whole of him was language.

She had once seen a conjurer pull yards and yards of narrow, bright ribbon out of his mouth; he pulled it, without stopping, until it flew in loops around him. Miles Roborow reminded her of this conjurer; his words were so fleet and so gaudy colored.

He told her that he came from a village

on the edge of Dartmoor; incidentally, hardly aware that he did it, he spread before her ardent vision some twinkling jewels of landscape; touches of dawn and dusk, the witchery of moorland, the magic of the moon and stars. He told her that his world—of Dartmooredge—had proclaimed him a singer with a future. He had been a member of the village choir and the mainstay of the village concerts. He added that when his father, the village druggist, died, he had sold the good-will of the business for a ridiculously inadequate sum—and come to London. So here he was in Stephen street, singing with the glad canary of the chorus-girls; moreover, he was dissipating his little capital while he hung upon the trailing, many-tinted skirts of Chance.

"I study at the Royal Academy for the present," he said, and frowned. "I don't believe in the Academy—for genius; places like that are all very well for workaday talent, but mine is a voice of the century. Yet you can't make these confounded professors understand; they are all in a rut."

He then named a great tenor and, with the large simplicity of one who knows himself to be superbly gifted, with that finished humility which is the product of boundless pride, he added:

"I must get an introduction to him; he shall hear my voice and then my fortune is made. Good heavens! It is a great thing to know yourself to be an artist."

He went on talking, talking. He forgot where he was and with whom. He would have struck dead—by intention—anyone who had dared to interrupt. Laura now and then threw in a faint word significant of her own career; he never even heard. The mood became grandiloquent eloquence on his part, indulgent attention on hers. She was the true woman, who always listens—or pretends to listen. It is these women who hold the winning cards. On the side of each was happy certitude; they meant to flash the jewels of their genius through London.

So they remained on the wide path

until the hour came for locking up the beautiful Gardens. An official with a shiny coat and a gilt band around his tall hat came up gruffly and bade them be gone. Miles stared at him, laughed aloud, mumbled, caught at the girl's ductile fingers and strode on.

II

MORNING

MILES walked up and down the Strand—that street of eloquence: Fleet street, a little east, for letters, the Strand for drama and, lying convenient to the kind south, the river—for solution!

He was blinded by lights and color; carriage-lamps and tiptoeing ruffles, one above the other, in a rainbow lavishness upon women's skirts. All the world was going to the theatre tonight—or to the opera. He was dizzy—with beauty and jewels; drunk—with the gaudy color of posters. When one has had nothing to eat for sixteen hours it is so easy to be dizzy, to be drunk, to be mad.

He turned down a side street to the river, and as he went he smiled superbly and, head flung far back, held his hand tight to his throat. It was a narrow, a quiet and dignified street, reminding him of Stephen street; dully, he wondered what had happened to Laura Court. She had never returned to the crowded, stately old house, and he had left it. That was twelve months ago—more. She had certainly made her mark; she was in the theatre at this moment, with the world at her feet. If this were not so, then he would meet her down here by the river tonight; because there was no midland for people of their sort.

He walked up and down the Embankment. He looked at the figures which sprawled upon the benches; bodies without a soul: so lumpish did these vagrants lie as they slept. He looked at the daintily shivering trees, yet always in the end he looked eagerly at the river. He leaned over the parapet asking the sluggish water

a thousand questions, which yet were but one question. The river is sick of being questioned; everybody asks—and asks; when the river will not speak then those who are desperate enough wrest an answer from her sullen breast.

Tonight, Miles did not insist—on the Answer. He walked away, starting on an aimless tramp through the night. He saw all the things which homeless men do see when they tramp London; until at last the streets grew silent; the great head of the city fell forward and this monster took to nodding.

London was a frightful place. Miles thought—it was a long time since he had remembered—of Dartmoor, placid and stern and, beyond all, good. Little home memories pressed to his broken heart, trying to heal it. After Dartmoor, he remembered Laura Court and that wonderful June walk of theirs in a noisy green garden. He could see her little pointed chin and the pallor of her face. He could see her vivid, thin gestures. This memory of Laura was one that he could love.

His feet, of their own initiative, took a way toward Stephen street. This was at dawn. He welcomed it—the slut of a London dawn. Night was over; the madness of strange eyes that had flashed at him as they passed; the insidious tempting of the river. He saw daylight, saw sober people with a steady, constant job in life; people who were untainted by Ambition. Dawn had pulled him back—from the river. He owed the lean jade something for that. Or was it Laura Court who had drawn him back, by her quick lips and thin, restless hands?

Rain was falling—with smuts; with curled-up, drifting leaves, with bold little birds that swooped from the roofs to the roads. The sun arose. He imagined the sun rising over Dartmoor and he recalled dawns of long ago when he had arisen stealthily and gone out in dimness and wilderness and sung aloud to the chanting wind and imagined that the moor was an opera-house. The whole world had been his very own in those days. Why had he not stayed at Dartmoor and kept—

illusion? He had a wise moment; it was better to keep illusion than to risk reality: the illusion of Art, the illusion of Love. If men could but learn this, they would remain happy.

Yet more than sun and Dartmoor dawns he recalled Laura Court; a little girl with hair the color of cinnamon, with a skin that was thick—he thought of the shallow cream pans of the west country.

His shoulder rubbed at a railing—in moments he walked like a drunken man—and, staring up, he saw trees with dingy trunks and Autumn mantles.

He fed his eyes with gold and russet—this was Marlowe's Inn and he had come back to Laura. His head and his feet were light—with hunger; his heart began to stagger—with something else.

He crossed the road and stole down Stephen street; he went slinking—with marauder cats. Yet he began to be somehow comforted by the long lines of heavily-carved wooden porticoes above the doors. Age and rich London grime together with the pallid grief of very early morning made of them ivory. The men who had designed those houses were artists, great artists—and therefore one's comrades. He grew happier in that subtle way which even pain and hunger cannot destroy.

And all the time he was thinking of Laura—who had suddenly become his Art. He wondered where she was and, wondering, he trembled. London was so full of bitter chances for an ambitious little girl who was eager and weak; who had a quaint, plain face which could sometimes burn into a beauty better than mere pink prettiness.

Why did she step suddenly into his misery, his hopelessness, his hunger and odd gladness—this pale brown neighbor of a year ago? This was the wilful way of woman; she stepped without warning into a man's life and straightway scattered it.

He stood outside No. 25, looking up at the windows, a flashing battery of little panes sunk in deep frames. He had lived in this house and been clothed with splendid hope. He

stood before it now in tatters of the spirit and he wondered if the same lodgers still dwelt there and if they were all going on in the same meager way: the devout old maid with her dark story, the gossiping widow, the married pair, the drunken fiddler and the stone-deaf worker in metal. There were the chorus-girls, too, with their golden shrill canary. And—and there was Laura!

He was standing close in the shadow of the door—haggard and bright-eyed, with one hand gripping his bared throat—when she stepped out. Their eyes met, they were comrades and they took the hurdles—of more than twelve months—in a leap.

"Don't," she said instantly, with a voice and glance of agony, looking at the hand on his throat and divining all that this gesture carried.

With her own hand she drew his gently down and, subtly, she was caressing it; the long bony hand of his that madly supposed it held in it a treasure. He marked that Laura also was in tatters of the spirit. The gossamer glory of Night when they had walked together in June beneath the early, flaunting green of old trees—that was forever gone.

"Shall we go and walk in the Gardens?" he said thickly, pushing his hands deeper into hers.

The gate stood open and the lodge-keeper's lean wife was sweeping her steps. All the women near Stephen street were sweeping or swilling at this hour; their figures were fallen and their cheeks were the color of clay. It was a gaunt hour.

She let them pass in—against the rules. She smiled wistfully after them—for her own hour, which had been. Just for a moment she made a crook of her broom and leaned on it, watching; for even haggard women, who sweep, keep eyes for Love.

They went and walked along the gravel path—a tremulous, tightly linked two, in the sordid morning. Leaves blew, branches trembled, the irascible north wind swept all drifting

things together into small, desolate heaps. The sky was sulky and fine, venomous rain kept spraying.

Laura spoke first, in kind little jerks to cover awkwardness. He looked so broken; his threadbare, shiny suit gave forth gleams like water. True, tender woman as she was, she humbugged boldly.

"I thought we should never meet again, Mr. Roborow, and I often—wondered. I read all the posters, looking for your name. When I didn't find it, I thought you must be calling yourself Signor Something; stars do."

"Stars!" his curt laugh sat on the north wind. "It was all a mistake."

Then he began to talk, but slowly this time, not as in ardent June. He drew it ghoulishly out—the desolate admission of his utter failure. His words flowed as the gray and oily river had flowed beneath the bridges last night. His hand fluttered in her grasp.

"Many a time I've tried to cut my throat; meant to, I mean—never got there—quite. I wasn't big enough or bad enough for suicide. Which is it? Or—both?"

He was laughing, and the sound cut her right through; it was bleaker than the north wind.

"To drag the treasure clean out of my throat and throw it in the face of the world; or to fling it in the river—my voice—and set the Thames on fire."

"Don't," she said, once more, as he kept on laughing and she started to shiver.

"I—won't; because it's all humbug. I never had a voice—to speak of. And that's the sober truth; only I'm not sober enough to quite believe it—yet. Do you understand?"

She nodded; she could not speak. He saw her own throat, the lean, unsullied throat, which he felt sorry for and loved—working convulsively.

"You always understand, God bless you," he said huskily. "You did just now in the doorway at Stephen street. If I could have had a great voice and lost in it some great way—that would have been a tragedy."

"I know, I know," she said, in quivering gasps of perfect sympathy. "A person can stand that—something big."

"They told me from the first at the Academy that I was no good, but I was so—so sure."

He looked at her piteously as they turned on the long path, putting the north wind behind them.

"And then I got a hearing at last from—"

"That big tenor?"

"Yes. He listened, and he—laughed."

"The big brute!" said Laura valiantly. "I'd never go and hear him sing after that; not even if someone gave me tickets."

How valiantly her eyes flashed through this penurious morning!

"Tell me the rest," she said more quietly.

"There isn't—any more. I knew he must be right; I take off my hat to your big artist at once, always. London is a firmament, full of stars, and I was only a glow-worm off the moor."

"And I was a paper rose," sighed Laura.

She flung up her narrow pale head and laughed; Miles joined and they laughed together. It was a sound of battle and tears, of mortal wounds. The old trees were cynically listening; since for many generations they had heard this kind of laughter—at intervals. The drama of life remains the same, although the cast changes. And those stately old houses standing all around the Gardens had sheltered many a turbulent spirit.

"A paper rose! You—too?"

"The stage is all a fraud," she said passionately. "They turned me off—always, every time, before my engagement was ended. But I kept on trying for a long while; I know I could have done it, if only they had been more patient with me at the start."

And she told him that she had gone back to the shop—but a cheaper shop; and his heart ached for her down-trodden shoes, for her gloves with cobbled-up fingers; but most for the sadness of her eyes; sadness which in

a way would remain for always—since she, with him, had clutched and had missed.

"It's easy enough to make a living," he said, with a braggart shrug. "I'm starving; yet if only I could get my pluck back, I'd make money hand-over-hand in a hundred ways—tomorrow; no, today, this very morning."

The dignity of his manhood returned.

"It's easy enough for a man," agreed Laura, "but a woman gets pushed to the wall; unless she's a hustler, that is—and I never was. And to have had Ambition—and lost it! Nothing takes the place of that."

"Unless people—care for each other," he said.

"But that isn't the same as—Art," whispered the girl.

She looked at the clouds, at the flaming Autumn trees; at sparrows; at green grass; at the prim gravel path and the haughty houses. She even tried by anxious vision to get a sight of the flying north wind—but never once did she look at Miles. The marvelous moment had come for them—when eye had a delicious terror of eye.

"Oh, look up at me—dear," said Miles. His was a rich, low voice—it sang.

"I—I can't."

She made an incomparable gesture of wild retreat; so that through that one moment of their lives, at least, these two were the finished artists they had yearned to be. Love sits so high above Ambition; Love will never fade away.

"But you shall—look. I won't fail—here."

Still retreating, still wild, still the incomparable dramatic artist, Laura looked up. And so, between them, this broken two, they had caught this great gift of Love; the gift more elusive than great Art and immeasurably more precious. Art is for those who fail—with Love! it is the mourner's crown.

They held it—Love! It dropped—from where? From the spiteful sky from the trees that rocked? Or did it fly out from those watchful old houses, in all of which dead men and dead women had once loved with fervor?

One must believe that the fragrance—of Love—remains. You can make pot-pourri out of a sweetness other than rose-leaves.

They held the great gift—Love. And when their eyes met at last—the delicate indulgence of the first assured glance—there broke from the parted lips of each a young, glad, startled sound which was all music. Miles spoke her name—Laura! As he said it, did not the elm-trees hear, that once, at least, the voice of a great tenor?

They stood still on the path, hoarding this moment which would come again—never. They knew, as all lovers do, although most of them know it only for a moment and as speedily forget, that common things, such as getting your living, and vain things, such as becoming a person of mark—these things do not matter in the very least, so long as one stands, as two stand, on the broad steps of human Love, which is a flight leading up to the Love eternal.



TO A BEE IN A FLORIST'S WINDOW

By Hilton R. Greer

SAD rover, from thy native heath beguiled,
Do the false kisses of a pampered rose,
On whose frail cheek but hectic color glows,
Thrill thee, as did the warm lips of the wild
Hedge roses, or their sisters pink, who smiled
Above the singing brook? Ah! one who knows
A captive's longing, shares thy secret woes,
Poor prisoner! He, too, is Nature's child!

He, too, has quaffed from cups of eglantine,
Has known the fragrance of the flowery mead,
The wide blue sky, the morning's prescient stir;
Has beaten futile wings, as thou dost thine,
'Gainst cruel windows, struggling to be freed,
And been, like thee, the city's prisoner!



A LONG LOOK AHEAD

WIFE—When will you bring that handsome Mr. St. Clair to the house again?
HUSBAND (*coldly*)—When he is too old to be called handsome.

THE MAN WITH THE FROZEN FACE

By Harold Ballagh

WE had just crossed the Rio Grande. Not at El Paso, nor yet at Laredo, but at Eagle Pass. The great overland train had stretched its length in the centre of the bridge while the Mexican health officers and custom-house officials made free with our persons and luggage. However, as their courtesy was un-failing, one could not complain of that. It was happily all over. Labels of *Aduana* were pasted on trunks and bags, the last sentimental young lady had waved her handkerchief in a long or short good-bye to the country of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Everyone had settled down to enjoy or suffer, as the case might be, the journey over the great stretch of arid tableland which spread itself between a never-ending mountain chain on either side from the Rio Grande to the most southern limits of the Republic.

It chanced that all the sections in the Pullmans were taken, so I had bought a berth in a stateroom, and my roommate was now glowering out of the window. We had sat in this fashion several days already, for we had both got on at St. Louis.

He was tall, slender, more dark than fair, a man of perhaps thirty years. Beyond a nod when first I entered the room and disposed of my traps, he had scarcely seemed to be aware of my presence. He sat rigidly gazing with unseeing eyes out of the window. Occasionally he would stretch himself on the sofa, and even in sleep his countenance held the same fixed, frozen, immobile expression.

Having knocked around the world considerably, and not being of an

inquisitive nature, I made no attempt to get better acquainted with this singular man, understanding that any confidence would come more readily from him if I appeared to have no interest in his affairs.

One morning he had unexpectedly turned on me a searching look.

"You do not appear to be interested in the country we travel through," he said.

I looked up from my book, flicked off the ash from my cigar, and answered sententiously, "Old story for me."

"Are you a Virginian?"

"Yes. You, too, have the Southern shibboleth, but the State—" I paused suggestively.

"I'm from Arkansaw, as we say down there. Now, damn you, laugh!"

His lips were twisted satirically, but no smile stood in his eyes and I did *not* laugh. For that matter, from first to last I never saw even a smile upon his face. Each returned to his book.

Later on I said, "Will you join us in a game of bridge in the smoking-room?"

"No, thanks."

I did not ask him again. A man who prefers his own society is welcome to it. However, at stations he paraded up and down the platform with me, and in no way avoided me. As far as I observed he had nothing to say to anyone else on the train.

As I said in the beginning, we had just crossed the Rio Grande. The Man of the Frozen Face, whose name I had not learned, flung himself into his seat, after closing the drawing-room door. I looked up inquiringly from where I sprawled on the sofa.

"It's over!" he said explosively, "and I want to shut it out."

"Shut what out?"

"The Spanish!"

I asked no question; I regarded him attentively.

"When they gave me this stateroom they asked if I objected to sharing it with another man. I replied, No provided he does not speak Spanish!"

"But I do speak Spanish," I corrected.

"Then keep it to yourself. I can't stand the sound of it. It makes me sick!"

His eyes blazed momentarily in the frozen mask of his face.

"That man is suffering the tragedy of his life," I said to myself. I looked at him from top to toe.

"A mining engineer, a civil engineer or an electrical expert," I concluded. His tones were cultured, his English correct.

"If you cannot speak Spanish," said I, smiling, "you have a mastery of English."

"Have I?" he asked in mollified tones. "I fear not now. I have passed so many years in construction camps away from civilization that I feel tongue-tied when I go to the States."

"Then I take it you *do* speak Spanish."

"I wish I could forget all I have ever known of it!" he said vehemently, but still with an unchanging countenance.

"Evidently you are sore on the country."

"Devilish sore!" he responded. "When I hear the language—the popular native tunes even played—it upsets me. I get nauseated! If only I could live in God's country!"

"Well, why not?"

"Too many years down here. I make money and I've got to stick it out."

"Hostages to fortune!" I murmured.

He swept me a suspicious glance. "Yes, more's the pity," he said under his breath. There followed a few minutes of absolute silence.

"For my part I like Mexico. The old-world life, the color, the movement,

the sunshine, the opportunities. When I go away I am glad to get back."

"Yes, yes. I've felt all that too. That's well enough for the surface. But to be *in* it, a part of it, among it, and unable to get away from it—that's the trouble."

"Sometimes a married man is not free to go and come—"

"I should say not," he interrupted. "Had you not guessed it? I am married!" This he said as if the tragedy of the universe were bound up in the words.

"Children?"

"Two." His square chin grew squarer, his eyes somberly gazed past me as if they would bore through the closed door. "Two, a girl of three years, a boy of two—too bad, too bad!"

"In the States?" asked I.

"In the States. She could no longer live in Mexico after—what happened."

I uttered not a syllable. I looked out of the window. There was the devil's playing-ground. Giant cactus-trees stretched out limbs as horrible to contemplate as the hideous members of the octopus, the Japanese devil-fish, or the hairy legs of the tarantula. Again the organ cactus, the Spanish sword, the prickly, ungainly disks of the ordinary cactus—all were so many varieties of nightmare vegetation sternly threatening the intruder into this enchanted but disenchanting region. Bare, tall mountains, yellow, red, pink, brown, blue, violet—every color but green, stood shoulder to shoulder on either side of the great arid plains, grim, forceful, threatening indefatigable barriers against intrusion. The wonder came to one's mind how the pioneers ever got past these obstacles of nature to build the railroad, and once in how they ever got out.

"The fascination of the desert," said I, "its opaline sands, its vastness, solemnity, the smallness of man—"

"The awfulness, the devilishness of it!" he continued, shuddering as he spoke, but always with that awful calm of face that made a lump come in the beholder's throat.

"If you have been coming and going

here for years—" he announced rather than questioned.

"I have," I said, "both by land and sea."

"Oh, yes, the sea," he commented, "it is even more awful—like the treachery of the Latin race, so smooth, and in these latitudes so warm, playful, silvery, without warning a norther on the gulf and the furies of the lower regions let loose!"

I smiled in spite of myself. "I have made the journey often by land and sea, as you said, and always without accident or alarm."

"However, in your frequent journeys have you not noted upon your return the melancholy of the land? As if the aura of those past awful centuries, when fiendish human sacrifices every morning greeted an outraged sun, still hung like a pall over the whole country?"

"Why, no; rather the dazzling sunshine, the outdoor life, the high mountains, the open plains, the bottle-blue sky, give me a sensation of happiness, of pleasure in the little things, of space to breathe in, of elbow-room, a general feeling of well-being, of content. Then the people, their warmth, sociability, the glad hand, the full embrace—"

"Oh!" he interrupted, in accents of finality, "surface politeness. But beneath, beneath, the hidden knife, the slander, the treachery— Oh, the people! You *know* when you are of it!"

I looked at him wonderingly. The tragic mask of his face told me nothing. What was this, then—an ordinary story of hard luck? But he had not the look of the unsuccessful man. A business rivalry or treachery? But this sort of experience does not strike the heart, the ego, to such an extent as to freeze the very features of a man.

"Are we not all of it?" I asked.

"Not you," he said, stabbing me with one sharp look: it was as if he had touched me with an unbuttoned foil. "You have not a native wife!"

I tried not to change color, but for that matter he had ceased to look at me. He was looking at something awful

which stared him in the face and would not down. Unwinkingly he stared back, while I sat paralyzed. So this was a squaw man! Impossible!

"Not *you*," he muttered; "you see from the outside, I from the inside. Whenever I hear of an American marrying a native girl I say, 'Another good man gone wrong, lost!' And it is all my own fault! The irony of life! It is a perfect farce." Here he gave a grimace which was supposed to be a laugh. "Oh, when I go north and see those nice, free American girls walking about they look good to me. They look wholesome! They look clean, and good, and right!" He sat motionless as to gesture or expression; his passion was expressed only in his voice.

"Yet," said I, still half stunned, adjusting mental balances as swiftly as might be, "I have known the marriages you speak of to appear successful."

"Appear!" he sneered. "That's just it. Nobody will tell the ghastly truth. Other inexperienced young fellows come down, do what I did, and you have the heart tragedies which may never be suspected, but are always there. 'Young man, go West'; it used to be; now it is, 'Young man, go South. The further South the better.'"

"It's the best advice I know of," I said. "If I had a son I would bring him here to carve out his fortune."

"Yes, yes, that's true; the opportunities are here, if he will let three things alone: the women, the politics, and the *tequila*!"

"I have heard it said," I tried to speak lightly, to smile, but the tension of his seriousness, the awfully set look of his features, rebuked the least levity in me, "I have heard it said that the white man who takes to drinking *tequila* is a lost soul."

"He is!" ejaculated my companion. "I have never had *that* taste. Would you believe it? I once went three months without uttering an oath, taking a drink or playing a card—and all for the sake of a woman."

I glanced at him sympathetically. My look was lost. He still stared ahead of him in a rapt retrospection.

"We grew up together, we were schoolmates in a Co-Ed college. When I graduated I went to her. I told her I loved her and I wanted her to engage herself to me, so that as soon as I was in a position to support her adequately she would be mine. She said that we were mere kids—and she could not think of engaging herself to anyone. Now she was a religious girl, and I a fellow not trained that way."

"Did it ever occur to you that in the economy of nature the good girls were intended to influence the wild young men, and the steady fellows to hold down and direct the frivolous girls?"

"Perhaps that is true—anyhow, I was to boss a gang of laborers in a construction camp all Summer. To please her then I promised not to use an oath, nor drink, nor gamble. It was hard work. Those niggers certainly did need swearing at—the rest was easier—but I kept that promise. Then I went to her and told her I was going to Mexico, and I asked her to go with me. I had never loved any other girl, and I wanted her, for she was a good girl. She said I was not just her sort, and she would not come to me. In justice to her I agreed with her that she was right, that I did not love goodness for its own sake, but only to please her."

There came to me in a flash the Psalmist's statement: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." And also the Buddhist text: "Even within such as this animal the knowledge supreme will unfold at last." But I did not interrupt the tense narrator.

"For her sake then I was being good, and not for the sake of the wholesomeness of being good for its own sake, and so I went away."

"Perhaps now you realize the value of right living for its own sake."

"Don't I, though! How wholesome those women in the States looked! It made me feel right just to look at them,

to know they were what they looked to be—good girls!"

"An army officer once told me that when he was at a post in the West it came to him one day that he never swore in front of ladies, and he said to himself: 'If I can refrain from swearing at one time I can at another.' So he quit altogether, and years afterward in a mining camp, where I knew him, he was marked by his clean speech. When I was growing up I could not utter a sentence without oaths."

"I have not heard one from you in these days of travel."

"Perhaps not," he said, "but, as I said before, for long periods I am out of civilization, so that I am not sure of myself when I get back to God's country. After all, life is a huge joke, a farce; our experiences are things to be laughed at!" But though he made the ghastly attempt, he did not laugh.

The colored waiter appearing, we ordered supper. A buffet broiler was our only dependence outside of the eating-stations which dotted the sandy wastes at regular intervals and were run by the inevitable Chinese. Of course, in the tourist season, the Katy Flyer, St. Louis' Special, carries her own dining-car all the way to Mexico City, but we were just ahead of the season, so we had taken the everyday Eagle Pass route, and in consequence our table was set up in the drawing-room and we had supper together. Afterward I went off to the smoking-car, and when I came back my companion was asleep, stern-featured as ever. After the conversation of the afternoon I was more than ever interested in the man. But I put no question to draw him out. I preferred to let whatever he had to say be entirely voluntary. Common delicacy, it seemed to me, required this; consequently the next day, I did not, in any way, refer to the domestic catastrophe at which he had hinted. I knew none of the particulars. When we spoke, which was not often, it was on indifferent subjects. The next afternoon, however, as we stood on the platform, at a station, an old blind

peon began to play on a guitar and sing one of the airs of the country, an air with a weird and melancholy twist at the end of the refrain. After a second I found my arm grasped by my companion.

"Let's get away from that!" he ejaculated. His face was set in a tragic despair, his eyes showed his suffering. With an iron will he seemed to be holding his emotion in check. I went off readily to the end car where was our stateroom. He shut the door fiercely and, sitting down, wiped his forehead.

"Good heavens! I can't stand it!" he ejaculated. "It makes me sick, sick!"

I took my flask out of my grip. He shook his head, but I filled the cup and brought him a glass of water. He tossed off the liquor and took the chaser. Then he looked at me, but only with a fleeting glance. "What a fool a man can make of himself!" he said.

"You are sensitive, unstrung. Things assume undue proportions under strain."

"Yes," he owned. "I have been under a strain—just been going through the divorce mill."

I said nothing. What could a man completely in the dark say?

"To think of the irony of it all! I thought it was the right time, the right place, and I had got the right girl—educated, nice people. I married her. I think it is immoral for a man to live unmarried!"

"You are frank."

"I believe in frankness, in sincerity. It's immoral for a man not to marry the moment he can support a woman."

"But that is an elastic measure."

"I don't mean in affluence, I mean in moderation. I could not get the girl I loved, so I thought it did not matter whom I married—any decent girl would do. I put away every waking thought of the girl in the States. I was good to my wife, I gave her every attention a husband could. I was true to her. She never had any real reason to be jealous of me. She occasionally pretended to be, but it was pretense—she knew I was faithful to her. I put from

me waking thoughts of the other woman—but my dreams—well, I could not control my dreams. A man cannot be responsible for his dreams—do you think so?"

Although he asked the question he did not look at me. He talked like one who has to speak or burst, in a curiously unemotional voice, and with a set countenance rigidly controlled, as if the ghost of the man were telling his story.

"I had but one thought—to earn enough money to make a good home for her. I worked hard; when I got to the place I wanted, I found it was all—punk!"

Between the lines of his speech I read what he did not tell—hard work under a fierce sun that his children might have a home, denying himself the minor indulgences that a single man would have had in order that his wife might dress well.

"D'ye know," he said poignantly, "in all these years I have never got an inspiration from her, never an uplift. Ah! the trouble is in the training—mistake license for liberty!"

"Did you see your former friend when you were home?" I asked.

"No," he said sadly. "I went to see her, but she was on a visit. Do you know, she has never married!"

"Did you write to her after you first left for Mexico?"

"No, what was the use?"

"Very foolish," said I, smiling. "Perhaps she learned more by your absence than by your presence. 'Faint heart never won fair lady.'"

"I suppose it was silly; but I gave up, and after all, propinquity is essential to a man's love."

"Yet novelists write of undying affection."

"Not without sight or sound. In spite of the sentimentalists it is a question of propinquity."

I thought that his own history proved the contrary, but I said nothing. When he was in trouble, like a pigeon starting its homeward flight his first thoughts had turned to her, the good girl, the sweetheart of his youth. Be-

sides, he confessed he could not control his dreams. It looked immensely like a case of constancy to first love not usual among men.

"Yes, of propinquity," he continued; "every woman is a Delilah."

I raised startled eyes, but he only gazed into space.

"The only difference is, some abuse their power and some do not."

I made no comment.

"Are you a philosopher?" he asked.

"We are all philosophers—in a way," I said, smiling.

"Always I have philosophized over things, but when the finger of God, in personal experience, is pressed scorching upon the heart, philosophy fails."

"And yet it is said it does not matter what happens to us, only how we take it!"

His head went up, but he said nothing. I bit back a smile of comprehension.

"The Japanese proverb says: 'Heaven and hell are in the hearts of men.'"

"That's so," he ejaculated.

"May I tell you a story? It is a Japanese story."

He nodded.

"A Bodhisattva was showing his young companion the Vision of Life. The way was wild, long, steep, desolate. The young man stumbled after his wise instructor with aching limbs and tortured heart. 'Follow after me, and strength will be given you!' Hearing these words of encouragement he pressed on. Darkness came; as he climbed fragments turned beneath his feet, masses tumbled behind him into echoing space, a great fear fell upon him. But still his guide went on and up. 'Only the strong of heart can win to the place of the Vision!' came his voice; and with panting heart the youth followed. At last came the light. It disclosed the awful gruesomeness of a pathway of skulls. 'I go no further,' cried the pilgrim, trembling. 'I am afraid; there is nothing but skulls of men!' 'It is a mountain of skulls,' replied the Bodhisattva, 'but understand, my son, that all of them *are your own!* Not one belongs to any other;

each in turn has been the nest of your delusions, dreams and desires!'"

Then I was rewarded by one look from the Man of the Frozen Face. His eyes beamed comprehendingly, for a moment only, into mine. His lips unbent into almost tender lines.

"Stepping-stones of our dead selves," he murmured, and then swiftly looked without upon the great plains sliding by, studded with the evil-looking devil shrubs.

"It is easy to die, but how hard to live—right!" he exclaimed.

"Shall I give you another Oriental maxim?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Be the teacher of your heart; do not allow your heart to become your teacher."

But here our tête-à-tête was interrupted by the conductor.

In his wake came a man from one of the forward coaches, very short, very dark and very thin. After he had passed to the observation-car my companion said: "Please do not introduce me to that man."

"As I do not know your name, I can hardly do that," I replied, smiling.

He looked mystified for a moment, then, absolutely unsmilingly, produced a card. On this I read: *Mr. Robert Harrington Page*. I told him my name.

"Why do you not wish to know that man?" I asked.

"Because I have known him in the past, though he has probably forgotten me, and at this stage of affairs I do not wish to be recalled to him."

I perceived that his recent tragic experiences had made him as sensitive as a schoolgirl. By this time we had reached Torreón, and I was surprised to find my roommate getting off. I had been under the impression that he was booked for Mexico City. He told me good-bye as gravely as he had nodded when I first entered the state-room. A half-hour afterward, as I stood on the observation-platform, the slim, dark man I had recently observed came to my elbow.

"Didn't I see you talking to Robert Page?" he asked.

"Yes, that was he."

"My name is Olcott. I used to know him, but I suppose he has forgotten me. He has just been to the States and got a divorce. It was all in the newspapers."

"Unfortunate affair, I judge."

"Very; he made the mistake of being too good to his wife. You can't treat a girl who isn't an American as if she were one. Pretty woman, stylish dresser, but these women, brought up as they are, can't stand too much liberty. They don't know how to take care of themselves."

"And yet I think the Mexicans generally make the most faithful of wives; in fact, they are perfect martyrs to the whims of their lords and masters."

"Yes, when the husbands are of the Latin blood; for they give them no liberty."

"Yet Page—"

"Is sore, doubtless. His individual case might serve as a warning to many a thoughtless young chap who comes down here."

"Perhaps a man of her own people appealed to his wife more."

"Not on your life! A Latin would have boasted in the cafés, but an American is not likely to talk; consequently, the friend she favored was a well-known American. Of course, Page feels like a fool—and he had worked hard for her."

Thus was corroborated the story of **The Man with the Frozen Face.**



THE MAGDALEN

By Lulah Ragsdale

LORD, where the red, red kiss
Printed its redder stain
See now, how pallid it is,
Worn, as by dripping of rain.

Down through the gray, gray years—
Ashes of one delight—
Lo! how the long, slow tears
Have washed it till it is white.

Whiter than snow, and yet
Is there a lip so fine
That, knowing, would heedless set
Its costliest kiss on mine?

God seeth only the snow,
Man keepeth visions of red:
And the trailing years must go
Empty and barren and dead.

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE

By Vanderheyden Fyles

NEITHER of the women in the brougham indicated having observed the glaring headlines of the first page of the late evening paper flung in at the small window by an eager newsboy as the carriage drew away from the southerly exit of the Opera House. But it would have been impossible for either to doubt that the other saw what she had seen. And although she hesitated to refer to it, the younger woman was frankly curious to know what effect the sensational charges had on her aunt: she thought she discerned the slightest stiffening of Mrs. Loring's erect form within the soft folds of her evening-cloak.

Mrs. Loring said: "Sardou set to music by Giordano is a peculiarly final triumph for Puccini."

Leila made no comment. Nor did Mrs. Loring speak again until the short but crowded stretch of Thirty-ninth street to Fifth avenue had been traversed.

"Do you mind, Leila—?" she started; then she said, "I hardly feel equal to going on to the Huntingtons' after all. Couldn't you telephone Arnold at his club?"

"Supply the second-rate cynics with chit-chat by dancing with my own husband?" she laughed, as she gave the order to turn the horses down Fifth avenue instead of up. She could not restrain her thoughts from dwelling on her cousin and on the vague journalistic attacks which had evidently culminated, at last, in definite sensationalism; but she contrived to manifest a convincing interest in her aunt's latest plan to extend the beneficence

of her Day Nursery. She remembered that when Mrs. Loring's younger son was killed at San Juan, the mother redoubled her activity for her home for crippled children of the poor, talking volubly of it—but no word of the dead boy in the trench. But she made no reference to this or other recollections, or to the new shock, during the drive to Washington Square. She suggested that she arrange a bridge party for the nursery fund, and threw enough enthusiasm into the plan to sustain them to the third door on the north, after the turn into the dim old Square.

In directing him, as she entered, to call up Mr. Bruton at his club, Leila interrupted the footman's announcement of Vincent Loring's arrival from Washington and his request to see his mother when she returned from the Opera.

"Don't wait with me, Aunt Helen," Leila said. "Arnold won't be any time—and I can make myself wholly comfy in the drawing-room."

She moved tenderly as though to kiss her aunt. Mrs. Loring extended her cheek.

"Good night, child," she said. "And if you'll lunch with me tomorrow we can discuss further details of your generous plan."

Leila watched Mrs. Loring's ascent of the broad stairway before passing into the drawing-room. She did not call for candles, but stood in the dark stillness, vaguely conscious of a restful peace. She seemed to see in the dim shadows—the chilling silence of her aunt seemed to make her see—the rigid form of her uncle as he had lain

in the centre of the room, facing with smug frigidity the formal eulogies of statesmen and financiers, whose prepared periods, typewritten for greater care, had been distributed to the newspapers before being proclaimed emotionally across the coffin of the dead senator. And back near one of the tall white pillars that now showed ghost-like against the quivering light of the fire beyond it, her aunt had stood, as rigid as the dead. Again her niece had seen her stand so. But this time no face looked out from the coffin, for it was a sealed, rough-hewn box, and wrapped in the Stars and Stripes.

Presently Leila became aware of a tall, slender figure outlined against the firelight. As she moved toward him the man lifted his head and she saw that it had been sunk in his arms.

"Who is it?" Loring asked. Leila could scarcely believe the attitude to have been her cousin's. But there was no doubting the full, authoritative voice.

"It is I—Leila," she answered. And then, going closer to him, she said: "What is it, Vincent—is this something very terrible?"

He laughed. He had the art of laughing lightly without a show of effort. "Nothing, dear Leila," was his remark. "Has mother come with you? I want to see her."

If Bruton had not arrived at that moment Leila might have ventured further with her cousin. It was a return to custom when she veiled her concern for him beneath a tone of impersonal lightness.

"Why not bob 'round tomorrow," she said, "and tell me and the kiddies everything that has happened during this age since we've seen you?—anything from Tokio to Washington." Then, as a parting word, she laughed: "I suppose the Manila experiences are awesomely untellable 'state secrets,' so expect us to insist on them above all others!"

"And what," said Mrs. Loring, in a manner somewhat more than usually detached, "was the result of your interview with the President?"

She occupied herself rearranging the numerous cushions behind her in the voluminous chair that had been drawn close to the crackling fire, which, with a pair of candles on her distant dressing-table, supplied the sole illumination of her vast and somber boudoir.

Vincent paid no heed to her question. With hardly a glance toward her he moved silently through the shadows, and, parting the heavy portières that curtained it, gazed out through one of the tall, wide windows on the midnight quiet of the old Square. The mother did not intrude upon his meditation. As she moved slightly in her chair, the cozy fire cast the shadow of her form across this and that familiar picture or bit of furnishing of the home. But Vincent was looking out into the night, where the shadows were of the great trees that had lived through centuries, and were cast by the eternal moon. High among the ancient trees rose the stately, great white arch to freedom and to the father of it. And though hardly a pedestrian passed through the Square at this time of night, Vincent discerned some men—emaciated, thin-garbed, hopeless—who lay on benches and slept in the shadow of the arch.

The tall clock in the corner of the room had chimed a second quarter of the hour before Vincent turned from the window.

"I must talk to you, mother," he said: "I must talk to you of much."

"I always want you to talk of all your plans and interests and ambitions with me," her rich, gentle voice replied.

"Not that way," he interrupted; "we've never really talked together. I've never really talked with anyone."

"Come, Vincent," she said; "sit here by me."

"I've never felt," she went on, when he had seated himself in the other large chair by the fire, "that I had a right to intrude on the thoughts and lives of my sons merely because I was their mother. But," she concluded, with an unfamiliar, self-conscious little laugh, "if I must correct my ways,

I'll start by asking if this absurd newspaper attack is the cause of your worry."

"You saw it, then?" he queried, glancing up.

"I couldn't help it. Of course I didn't read it."

"You might have. It is what I want to talk with you about."

"Oh, if that is all!" she remarked, with a rippling, relieved laugh, as she leaned back among her cushions. "Surely, Vincent, a man of your achievements is long past caring what a scurrilous newspaper says of him. You must have expected as much from this politician-editor: he's always been inimical to you. And with this extraordinary opportunity for you at hand—Of course," she questioned suddenly, "there's no hitch in the appointment?"

"Oh, no—that's all right," he murmured. "The President was very flattering. My success in the Manila affair will be given as a semi-official reason for such an extraordinary advancement, but the President did not hesitate to intimate pretty definitely that my peculiar knowledge of conditions at Tokio and at Seoul will be of material value to the Department just now."

"There is much reason to congratulate you," Mrs. Loring said. "Splendid as this is, though, we must regard it rather as a long step forward in a career of infinite possibilities. When does your actual activity commence?"

"I don't know," he said. "In fact, I have not, as yet, accepted the appointment."

Only the crackling of the blazing wood and the slow ticking of the tall clock in the corner broke the silence. The stillness seemed vibrant with the hostile horror of the lady among the cushions. "What do you mean?" she murmured finally.

"You saw that paper tonight," he answered.

"What of that?" was her retort. "Some chit of a country girl. An unpleasant story, perhaps. Even, possibly, you were indiscreet; I hope not. That can be arranged, though. But I told you I have not read the charges."

"Evidently." He was gazing at his firmly clasped hands. He lifted his head and looked into his mother's eyes. "It was nothing like that. Even that yellow wretch didn't dare suggest it was; he knew damned well it wasn't. Besides, he saw a subtler way to use this poor child in a fight that should be clean and between men."

He paused a moment and forcibly reclinched his hands. "If you had read the story, mother—or any of the hints that have preceded it in his dirty sheet—you'd have seen us Loring painted as a sort of tinselized Tenorios, only far more absurdly proud than they possibly could have been; and me as the family's Don Juan, penetrating into the hills of New Hampshire to lure away an innocent girl. And she is innocent, God bless her! more innocent than those wretches possibly could understand."

Mrs. Loring looked upon her son's emotion with uncomfortable surprise. She never had seen him vehement before; she felt, vaguely, that it was unpleasant and improper.

"I know what you're thinking," he went on. "But I must talk of it to someone. When I came back from Manila with that beastly fever, on top of all the worry and work—you remember you proposed Aiken, or the Hot Springs, or something else as crowded. You were very kind. But I insisted on a solitary hunting trip up North; said I wasn't nearly down enough to be nursed. I was, though—and more than that. Because when I came 'round, after what they told me had been weeks, I seemed to have to learn about merely living slowly and anew, as a new-born kid might. Why, mother, it was a week or more after I was up and about before I could bring to mind even who had told me about the remote little farm-house."

"And this—girl?" said Mrs. Loring.

"I don't know," he murmured; "I can't seem to tell. I don't know when I first saw the sky; or when I came to know that the vague, fresh odor on the air was from a honeysuckle-vine around my window; or when I realized that

the sunbeam that flitted about my room, luring me back to life, was a girl with soft yellow hair, and frank, young eyes like the blue skies in the morning. But I knew that nature meant things that I never thought about before; and that I grew to love her first more as a part of a glorious new world than as a solicitous little nurse with golden hair."

The movement with which Mrs. Loring stirred to rearrange herself in her chair was ever so slight. The expression of her face was shadowed. Possibly she had moved that it should be so. Vincent drew himself rigid in his chair.

"Oh, I know," he said. "I'll confine myself to facts. I always have. This girl—this experience, if you prefer to look at it that way—made me see everything in life differently. I discovered for the first time that the world is made up of millions of human beings instead of a few great principles and enterprises."

"My dear Vincent," interrupted Mrs. Loring; "bear in mind the really big man you are."

"Why, I never was a man at all before," he retorted. "I was simply a peculiarly expert machine that saw large facts a little more clearly than most of my fellows and was more dexterous in anticipating and handling them. Then I came to know her. I mean when she emerged from the mists of the hazier first weeks. But the reality didn't make my love the less. Oh, I grant you she was utterly uncultured, as you and I understand such things. She was a child—although she was already nineteen or twenty. But she was like a child to me because she turned to me, almost unconsciously, to teach her; and, at the same time, I knew I must protect her from the embarrassment of ignorance. But ignorance is very sweet when it is innocence."

Again he brought his tone back to determined hardness.

"But facts! I know you consider them of sole importance. The facts were that I was in demand at Washing-

ton, and that I dallied at a little farm in New Hampshire; that I preferred to follow the shaded course of a hillside stream with an untutored girl, discussing, with a careful show of seriousness, some stupidly worthy book from the village library, rather than attack my work of consequence among men. But she was the sunshine; and I'd never known the sunshine."

He paused a moment, and then he went on: "Did you ever think, mother, that when Brother and I were the littlest youngsters, even, we had rows and rows of soldiers to parade and plan battles with, but never one of those silly little flannel animals that kiddies lavish their affection and innate spirit of protection on? Long ago you forgot, if you ever understood, the time you caught Brother with one of our tin soldiers in his crib, and took it from him lest he roll on it in his sleep and cut himself. He cried for days. And I teased him for as many days. Neither of us ever cried after that. But as the kid grew older he used to go out alone on his pony for long rides, sometimes, and his little face was set hard. And now I understand, because when things that are only funny to grown-folk seemed to me too hard to bear, I used to go up to the old garret and sit there alone for hours. Even when I knew no one could know, I never cried. I just clenched my fists and waited till I could master myself. But those things burned into me. Every imagined trial of childhood that might have been cried away to you; every trouble of later years that might have been lightened by the mere talking of it; every throb of love that I never dared to encourage or show, is in there, deep down inside. And this girl liberated it all—because she loved me, simply and frankly and confidently."

Mrs. Loring made no effort to shorten the long pause that followed before Vincent spoke again.

"But facts!" he went on, with a short, harsh laugh. "This wretched paper contrives to give them a pretty sordid look. Doubtless it's accurate enough in saying the countryside grew

curious when the identity of the recent boarder at the farm became known. They're right, too, when they say that she took many letters addressed to me to the post-office, and asked for many in reply, and received them. But they make facts lie by the way they tell of her coming to New York, and taking a poor room just 'round the corner from our comfort here; and of my calling there and hastening her away to an old house on Long Island."

"You admit the facts?" Mrs. Loring interposed.

"Yes. And tomorrow they'll be able to say that she has left the Long Island place and is at the miserable little lodging-house again. She will be. I have a note from her."

"You assure me," his mother said, "that this is not one of those common, reprehensible entanglements of youth?"

"Even this blackguardly sensationalist doesn't use it as such," he answered. "His object is to check me politically. God knows, he's welcome, if that would protect her. He knows well enough that a capable man could easily rise above such a commonplace scandal as he could manufacture from this. He's devised a subtler plan. Such a girl might seem remote enough from a public issue! But his accustomed method is to gain sympathy and attention through the 'human story,' to bring large issues 'close to the hearth and home.' The terms are his. He blinds his adherents and popularizes his own cunning schemes through an attitude of robust Americanism, which constructs an octopus aristocracy that it may vaunt its own strength and patriotism by exposing and overthrowing it. It's all, in a way, ridiculous. But it is with such cowardly and insidious weapons that this man fights. And his power is far-reaching."

"And he has made of your experience—?"

"Not a common scandal. Rather he exalts this girl as a sort of emblem of the down-trodden classes; while I typify the boggy aristocracy with which he incenses his followers. Beyond his ob-

vious purpose, he aims, through me, at the men who endorse me; and indirectly to illustrate the undemocratic principles with which he charges the Administration."

"Don't you exaggerate?" queried the lady among the cushions.

"No; and he can produce facts that appear to prove his fiction. But no one can know how things really were up there in the hills; people couldn't realize the great universal fact that I learned, unconsciously, from her, in exchange for the mere material knowledge I could teach. I could impart to her only the million artificial obstacles to a simple, natural expression of life which the thing called civilization has accumulated; while her mere existence made me understand the infinite significance and beauty of humanity and love."

"She seems, however, to have taught you to forget your duties in the world outside."

"She didn't, though," he retorted. "She spoke often of them, and of her ambition for me. But it was rather because of seeing the cheerful comfort that her tenderness and energy brought into the lives about her, that I came to think of the very different good that I might do as a privilege instead of a duty. I must idle there no longer. I asked her to come with me; to become my wife."

"And she refused?" was the incredulous query.

"She said we should wait; that she must learn much to prepare herself. But that, above all, I must go back alone among my people to make sure that this was not all a Summer fancy that could have no place in my life. Good God, mother, by what instinct could a girl like that foresee how it would be?"

"Your feelings hardly appear to have changed?"

"Say, rather, that I saw immediately how impossible it would be to bring her into this life," he replied. "I couldn't help but see the bruises that her sensitive little soul would suffer among people of knowledge and education and

experience. I couldn't blind myself to all the things that my love would be powerless to protect her from in a world that didn't understand and didn't care. Then, suddenly, I went back to her. I poured out the torrent of my love. And it seemed to overwhelm me when I realized all it must shield her from and make up for. But throughout my passionate appeal I sounded, unwittingly, the note of damning fact. For the unconscious burden of my declaration was that I would take her away—that we would find our happiness in each other—away from everyone! As she listened, a dumb misery came into her eyes. But she did not weep or reproach me. She only begged me to go away—and say no more."

"Yet after that you wrote to her?"

"It was horrible. She frankly existed on the letters. I wrote much and with tender care. But I could see that the situation was impossible; primarily, of course, for her, but for me, too, for my love grew rather than diminished. I realized that she must become my wife or communication between us must end. I wrote, asking her for a third time to marry me. She said she would not until she could take her place beside me in my world, until she could be a help to me and not a hindrance. It was then that I stopped my letters. I hoped she would despise me for it, would see me as the sort of man that newspaper pictured, later."

"But she came to New York, you say?" Mrs. Loring prompted.

"She had an utterly ingenuous idea that she could be near me, could be a companionable friend; could work with me in some way. Of course I saw the new danger. She didn't seem to appreciate it. The reporters were not slow to discover her presence around the corner from our house. I begged her to go home, but in vain. Then I arranged for her to go to a secluded place on Long Island, as a sort of companion to old Mrs. Darragh. The rest is quickly told. I promised to go there to see her, and did not. I promised to write, and did not. Finally she wrote that she had been forced to conclude

that the whole thing had been a heartless escapade with me. By silence I encouraged her to think that. But I couldn't bear the thought of her lingering confidence and love. It was at that time that these newspaper hints first took definite shape. They reached her and she was horrified lest I think she had inspired them, even inadvertently; yet confident that I couldn't. God knows, I knew her incapable of it. But it was my chance to make it easier for her by stamping out every spark of her love and respect for me. Caddish and contemptible, I know. But I believed I was doing the right thing. I wrote a carefully unconvincing assurance that I had confidence in her discretion, but markedly suggested that, under the circumstances, it might be safer if she would return what letters of mine she had."

"Vincent!" his mother gasped.

"I know," he answered, in a strained voice. "But it was the only way. And don't imagine that because I could see the necessity of it, clearly and without prejudice, it was any easier for me to do, that it didn't tear the very heart out of me. She would bring the letters to New York, she said; and if I asked again for them—'If you can ask me for them,' were her words—she would give them to me. That last miserable letter I must write tonight. But first I must make sure that I am doing the kinder thing—that I'm not a more contemptible cad than this critic of me, in believing the barrier between us insurmountable."

He sunk his head low in his hands. There was a pause before Mrs. Loring spoke.

"Of course your Americanism and mine," she said, "is too sincere and sane to make the mistake of accepting conventional 'class distinctions,' of judging people except as individuals."

"Yet, mother, all my desire seems incapable of removing the feeling that there is a barrier between us."

"I know," she answered, "or you couldn't have acted in such opposition to your love and manhood. And there is a class distinction that is American,

though very different from the 'family' idea, so inappropriately borrowed from conditions foreign to us. It herds us among our intellectual and moral peers. And a union that disregards it must inevitably bring misery to the man who sees his ability wasted and usefulness unrealized, and to the woman who finds herself inadequate to satisfy the best in the man she loves."

"Perhaps you fail to consider in your estimate the things for which love can compensate." There was a grating note of hardness in his voice as he concluded: "You never have reckoned much with love, have you?"

"You have accused me before, tonight, of a failure to encourage demonstrative affection in my sons," she answered, after a few moments. "But there's one thing I haven't heard you mention. From your earliest childhood I lost no opportunity to impress upon you, directly and indirectly, that you were Americans."

"Yes," he murmured.

"Oh, I don't mean the mere showy facts of your father's vigorous efficiency and honors as governor and senator," she went on, "or of my father's temperate sagacity at our Paris legation in the fearful seventies. Not that element of it."

She paused a moment, as though choosing her words with deliberate care.

"It has always seemed to me that we Americans have a peculiar heritage. We have no specified class upon which falls the hereditary duty of government and correct example; but are all of the one class, of which every person has his part, be it ever so inconspicuous and unhonored, in the preservation of national peace, and decency, and honor."

"You mean," Vincent interposed, "that an American who seems possessed of some special ability to aid his country should welcome it as a privilege and honor."

"Not as a privilege or honor," she answered almost vehemently, "but as a clearly specified, unavoidable duty. If I thought of your career only as a

pompous honor to be draped about you, I should tell you to devote your existence solely to that girl. Mere dignities, a place in a printed history, are empty things to sacrifice a lifetime to. But thousands of homes preserved in tranquillity and trust, millions of simple-minded men and women guarded by men of shrewd and honorable capability, are very noble incentives for statesmanship."

"Of course," Vincent remarked, without looking up, "you far overestimate my usefulness."

"Quite possibly. Already, though, the need of you is definite and recognized."

"Even so," he put in, "the soundest theories are often the most difficult to emulate."

"You mean that my principles would be more impressive if they had been put to such a test as you face?"

"I didn't say that."

"Well, I'll tell you what my test was," she answered. "You boys and Leila were youngsters. Your father was drunk with multiplying prosperity and the increasing power it gave him. His extraordinary constructive shrewdness, his genius for organization were in demand for countless enterprises. It was just after his transcontinental railroad scoop—but you were too young to know."

"When we went on the first trip across the merged lines on father's car?"

"And you and your brother laughed in baby pride at the tablets in stations along the line reared to your father's glory."

"And then we stopped at a whole town named Loring, after us! And the torchlight parade; and the bouquets of prairie flowers that the children from the works presented to Leila and to us."

"Yes," she murmured. "And the faces of those children! You don't remember them. But I shall never forget them. I went there a happy woman, proud in my husband's achievements and joyous in my boys' careless happiness and health. Then I

saw, gathering about you, hundreds and hundreds of thin, white children, workers in your father's factories, hardly older than my own sturdy babies, but with half-dull, half-feverish eyes, and hopeless, tired faces, like old men and women. Then I realized for the first time that thousands of lives of little children were being sapped out that just these two boys of mine should live as it had seemed their natural right to. And I swore, then, that you should both grow up to make reparation to that ruined multitude and to their bloodless, despairing progeny, by protecting them and bettering them according to your utmost capability."

"You've never talked to me in this way before," the son interrupted.

"That trip—and what it meant—was my secret, the force that sustained me and urged me on through thirty years of ceaseless, unswerving labor. Those children at the Loring works were only the first of the horrifying revelations when I set out to learn the actual meaning of being the wife of a 'great organizer.' Until then I had loved your father completely, as a tender, faithful protector. From then I came to despise him. For he was fully cognizant of the despair and suffering, the physical degeneration and moral murder, in the wake of his prosperity."

"My father!"

"At first it seemed that I must keep myself away from him," she went on. "Then I saw in that a selfishness no less despicable than his. For, thank God, it came to me in time to see the duty that stretched out before me."

"How—what duty?"

"The night of the miserable return from that trip I paced this room till the dawn came in through that window there. From that day I lived a lie to the man I despised, simulating in every detail and attribute the love that had been my whole existence only a little time before. For I saw that through him I could work and accomplish for the hopeless; that without him I would be powerless. And that without my love he would fall lower and lower in his wicked battle against them."

"The love that father cherished to the end was a lie?"

"It was an honorable lie!" She drew herself erect, almost defiantly, before her son. "For through it, and through his vanity, I spread good deeds of his from one coast of our land to the other. I lured him into interest in public life, in the holding of high offices. To that end he was lavish with his wealth and with his energy."

"That, then, was your work," young Loring murmured.

"That—and much more. It was as I knew it would be with him when he was governor, and during his long service in the Senate. For it was always the game that enthralled, not the end. He neither knew nor cared for the happiness or misery of his millions of fellow-countrymen. They were merely the pawns with which the game was played. But the winning, Vincent, was to accomplish the most good! And all the energy and knowledge that had gone to the amassing of a fortune—and to the crushing out of thousands of miserable lives—was turned to the up-building and developing of these same Americans."

There was silence for a moment; then, with a strange, cold laugh, she concluded:

"And when he died, long lines of poor followed his body, reverently and weeping, through the streets."

"Hush, mother," the son said.

"Ah, yes," she laughed, "that's an awful thing to say at the end of thirty silent years!"

There had been no sound for many minutes when the tall clock in the corner slowly struck four times. Then Vincent spoke in a husky undertone.

"I will break the last link in this thing today," he said.

Mrs. Loring moved wearily toward her bed-room door.

"May I write the note here," he asked, "to leave it to be sent the first thing in the morning?"

She nodded toward her desk by the window.

"Good night," she sighed. He moved almost impetuously toward

her, his arms outstretched. She gave him her cheek to kiss.

Some moments after the door had closed behind her, he turned to bring a candle from the dressing-table. But when he reached the desk with it he saw that a frigid gray light fell across the paper that awaited his note. He stood a moment, looking out of the tall, wide window. There was no sound. A chill dew was over everything. The ancient trees and the great white arch were hazy shadows in a cold, gray mist. But he saw that the black, thin forms still lay huddled about the arch. And they slept.

Leila paused a moment before leaving Vincent alone in her husband's den, to which she had led him that he and his expected visitor might be safe from interruption. She had comprehended quickly his brief sketch of the situation, and his reasons for avoiding seeing the girl at her lodgings or his own home; and had gladly offered her house as an unobserved meeting-place. His informatory details had been succinct and spare; she had obtruded neither sympathy nor comment. She had talked impersonally of the dinner that night to their uncle, celebrating his instatement as a chief justice, but refrained from reference to the opportunity which it obviously suggested for an announcement of Vincent's own appointment. As she opened the door to go, she turned hesitantly.

"It does seem hard, though," she said, "that the girl should have to face it here, in surroundings wholly strange to her—without even a familiar chair or table to lean against."

Then she was gone.

Loring hardly knew how long he had been standing back of the large library table, gazing vacantly at the blue, curling flames from the coal in the grate, when a maid announced that the young lady had arrived. Suddenly, involuntarily, he withdrew from the streak of afternoon sun that shot glaringly across the room from its one window. A shadow obscured the twitching of his face as the girl entered. But the

relentless light was full on hers. It played with the gold of her soft, yellow hair and accentuated the paleness of her delicate face. And it had no pity for the compressed lips and the nervous fingers in the black silk gloves.

The man stepped forward from his protecting shadow. His quiet manner of graceful welcome might have been expected to put the caller at her ease.

"The trip from Mrs. Darragh's?" he said. "You had an easy run?"

"Let's—let's not bother about all that," she said. "Your note this morning; I have it." She laughed in nervous mirthlessness. "Of course I received it. How else should I be here? How silly!" But she moved her hand wearily across her forehead.

"Won't you sit down?" he asked, moving a chair toward her.

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She drew a package of letters from a small bag she carried, and put it on the table. Vincent did not look at her. He had to concentrate the full force of his mind on all that he was protecting her from. The silence became horrible.

"If I could explain," he said finally, realizing the impotency of it.

"There's nothing to explain," she answered in a dull, colorless voice. "I don't want to know why you don't trust me—what you think I might do with these letters. The fact that you don't trust me—if you make me sure it is a fact—is all. That ends it."

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Vincent drove his nails hard into the

saw, gathering about you, hundreds and hundreds of thin, white children, workers in your father's factories, hardly older than my own sturdy babies, but with half-dull, half-feverish eyes, and hopeless, tired faces, like old men and women. Then I realized for the first time that thousands of lives of little children were being sapped out that just these two boys of mine should live as it had seemed their natural right to. And I swore, then, that you should both grow up to make reparation to that ruined multitude and to their bloodless, despairing progeny, by protecting them and bettering them according to your utmost capability."

"You've never talked to me in this way before," the son interrupted.

"That trip—and what it meant—was my secret, the force that sustained me and urged me on through thirty years of ceaseless, unswerving labor. Those children at the Loring works were only the first of the horrifying revelations when I set out to learn the actual meaning of being the wife of a 'great organizer.' Until then I had loved your father completely, as a tender, faithful protector. From then I came to despise him. For he was fully cognizant of the despair and suffering, the physical degeneration and moral murder, in the wake of his prosperity."

"My father!"

"At first it seemed that I must keep myself away from him," she went on. "Then I saw in that a selfishness no less despicable than his. For, thank God, it came to me in time to see the duty that stretched out before me."

"How—what duty?"

"The night of the miserable return from that trip I paced this room till the dawn came in through that window there. From that day I lived a lie to the man I despised, simulating in every detail and attribute the love that had been my whole existence only a little time before. For I saw that through him I could work and accomplish for the hopeless; that without him I would be powerless. And that without my love he would fall lower and lower in his wicked battle against them."

"The love that father cherished to the end was a lie?"

"It was an honorable lie!" She drew herself erect, almost defiantly, before her son. "For through it, and through his vanity, I spread good deeds of his from one coast of our land to the other. I lured him into interest in public life, in the holding of high offices. To that end he was lavish with his wealth and with his energy."

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Vincent drove his nails hard into the

palms of his hands. But he kept silent.

"Here," she said. She half rose and pushed the package across the broad table that separated them. Then, as he put his hand out to take the letters, she covered them with her own.

"One thing," she said; "one last little favor." Her voice trembled pitifully; she seemed hardly able to form the words. "Destroy them. Don't re-read them. To think of you, as you feel now, dispassionately looking over what you wrote then—laughing, perhaps; I couldn't bear that. It's over. But let the memory live—at least for me."

She stopped as though the words choked her. She pushed the package again toward Loring. Then he saw that she was trembling all over. Her eyes were half-closed; she seemed to see nothing. She swayed as though about to fall. He rushed around the table, holding his arms out. As he reached her she tottered. He caught her and supported her, her head against his breast. Her delicate young body trembled in his arms. He could feel the fluttering of her heart. She was like a frightened bird that had been wounded.

"My little girl!" he cried, drawing her close in his arms. "Forget everything I've done and said. I love you—that's all that I can think of!"

She freed herself from his embrace.

"Not that," she said. "Don't make it like that. I don't want a love that's without confidence. I love you in a way that craves to bring out the biggest and best that's in you, to make you a worker for great worlds of people, with no thought of me. But if you doubt even this little thing—then you're not like that. Just say that, Vincent—that you think I could have brought about these stories, that you don't trust me—just say that, and it's all over."

There was a knock at the door. A maid entered. She explained that Mr. Loring's secretary had insisted that a long envelope which he had brought was of immediate importance.

Vincent threw it aside and dismissed the maid.

"Wait a moment," the girl said, as the maid was about to go. "I—I think I'll want you to show me out." Then she turned to Vincent. Her tone was quiet; her voice seemed under control.

"You—you think it best that these letters should be returned?" she asked.

Firmly he put down the enveloping love and yearning that seemed sure again to overwhelm him. He gazed at her in silence for a moment. He saw the gentle beauty of her life and of her ultimate content among her own people; and he saw the other possibility. Hazily he felt the many yesterdays of silent sacrifice of which his mother had told him. But above all, he saw a vague, vast something else.

"I think it would be best," he heard a hard, even voice say. Vaguely he realized that the voice was his.

He looked up from a mist. He was alone. He felt the package of letters in one of his hands. The other, without deliberation, opened the envelope from his secretary. He glanced at its contents. It seemed to be his speech for the dinner that night. Evidently, though, it took for granted his acceptance of the appointment. But everything was hazy. A few words seemed to be repeating themselves in his brain:

"Don't re-read them—not as you feel now—you might laugh—I couldn't bear that."

He threw the letters on the coals. They did not catch the flame. They seemed like a corpse lying on a pyre, waiting in ghastly patience to ignite. He could not bear the sight. He turned to the notes for his speech.

"Tonight," he read, "is the proudest—"

The room had grown very dark. He could not make out the words. Suddenly there was a brighter flame than the smoldering coals had produced. He leaned over, holding the paper close to the quivering light.

"Tonight," he read, in a sonorous monotone, "is the proudest and happiest of my life. I find myself on the threshold—"

LOVE'S TAPESTRY

By Archibald Sullivan

SAID she, "Go fetch the palest stars
That blossom in the Summer skies,
The amber tissue of the sun,
A flight of opal butterflies;

"A skein of silver from the moon,
And trembling green from off the trees;
The rainbow that but yesterday
Was wonderful against the breeze;

"The whitest rose that ever blew,
The dewy emerald of the lawn;
And all the apple-buds that laid
Their pearly lips against the dawn;

"And fetch the nights I watched for him,
And find the veil of tears I cried;
And bring the little sob that broke
My heart upon the night he died.

"Then in the twilight I shall sit,
And never hear the years that flee,
But weave a beauteous tapestry
Of dreams about my love and me."



HIS PLEA

"YASSAH, I 'knowledges dat I steals, yo' Honah—now and ag'in," confessed Brother Bunkum, who had been dragged up before the bar of justice on the charge of embezzling sundry fowls. "I steals, sah, but on'y dess part o' de time—not all de time. De rest o' de time I sawtuh projects around amongst de diffunt 'ligious 'nomernations, eatin' dinner wid 'em and uh-makin' out like I was mighty nigh on de keen edge o' j'inin' deir church; and I 'umblesomely axes yo', sah, to lemme down easy, if yo' please, uh-kaze I does muh heenyusness dess some o' de time, as I says befo', and not all de time, like dese yuh trust gen'lemen dat we-all yeahs tell so much about now-uh-days. And, 'sides all dat, yo' Honah, what'd dese yuh good folks, dat's allus tryin' to 'suade me over to deir way o' thinkin', do widout me? If I was to go to jail dey wouldn't have nobody to practise on; and yo' organizes, yo'se'f, sah, dat dey kain't keep well less'n dey has some ripperbate to be everlastin'ly uh-pickin' at."

TOM P. MORGAN.

THE NIGHT OF THE WEDDING*

By Richard Duffy

CHARACTERS

DAN EGAN (*a truckman. A widower, about thirty-two*).

MINNIE EGAN (*his daughter, age ten*).

MRS. NORA DERVIN (*a widow, about thirty*).

SCENE: DANA'S rooms in an old-fashioned New York tenement in the neighborhood of Christopher street and Washington.

TIME: An evening in early Summer.

CURTAIN rising discloses MINNIE standing on chair, taking down dishes from cupboard shelves to set table. She takes down two or three plates—other items being already on table—returns to closet, mounts chair and is standing there when startled by sudden feline entrance of NORA DERVIN from door at R. NORA stands gazing about craftily to make sure that no one except the child is present.

NORA (*in harsh, bullying tone*)

What are ye dreamin' about up there?

MINNIE (*gives a great start of fright—chair rocks and she jumps to floor, jarred*)

I'm fixin' the dishes.

NORA

Nice time you think of supper, you young loafer. Is yer pah home?

MINNIE (*laying knives and forks at three places*)

It's only ten minutes of six.

(*Looks at alarm-clock on mantel-shelf over stove up C.*)

NORA

Don't ye think I can tell time me-self? Six o'clock and scalding heat. (*Looks out window toward glow of sunset.*) I kin see the sun over in Jersey from my window. It looks like a red-hot stove lid. What a night to get married!

MINNIE

Who's gettin' married, Mrs. Dervin?

NORA (*sneers*)

Mrs. Dervin! As if ye didn't know, Miss Minnie. Ye know blame well it's me an' yer pah! Mrs. Dervin! (*Sneers again.*) Ye'll have to call me mam to-morrer. And I won't be a Dutch wan either, like yer first mother. (*Looks at crayon portrait.*) She was a peach, she was, with molasses hair. Her name was Minnie, like yours. It reminds me of sauerkraut.

MINNIE *lifts apron to her eyes and cries silently.*

NORA (*goes over and talks to crayon*)

We'll give you a back seat in the cellar all right, me lady. You've got all the flowers that was comin' to ye. I'll send the wax ones out to Calvary to join ye. (*Turns, sees MINNIE crying. Comes at her and snatches down her hand roughly.*) Water, water again, is't? It's you that has the pump in your nose, ye two-faced dago, ye. Dry up! Ye'll smile all right when he comes in, won't ye?

MINNIE

He never makes me cry—never!

NORA

Ye're not afraid of him. Go wash yer yellor face. (*Leads her over to sink and washes her face roughly.*)

It's well fer ye that yer afraid of me.
D'ye know what I done wonst?

MINNIE (*drying her face and looking up
frightened*)

I won't cry any more sure, Mrs.
Dervin.

NORA

Call me mama or I'll take ye out
some night and—ye know them big
green wagons all shut up like a hearst?

MINNIE

The dead-horse wagon?

NORA (*weaving the spell*)

'Sh! Thim's not fer dead horses.
People say that for a blind. Them's
fer bad kids like you. We shut them
up tight. The boards is so thick you
can't hear the loudest scream. At
night an old man with long teeth, the
hair all over his face, drives down to the
river—out on the dock where it's dark—
dark, and where there's a great hole in
the dock and then a door opens in the
bottom of the wagon and down—

MINNIE, *terrified at this recital, is
growing whiter and wider-eyed until at
the moment of the highest tension she
screams. Door-knob at R. clicks.*
NORA *hears. Claps her hand over*
MINNIE'S *mouth and laughs hysterically*
as DAN *comes in, tired and hot, but*
alarmed at the incipient scream.

DAN

What's the matter, baby?

As DAN, *seeing MINNIE's frightened
face, goes quickly toward her, NORA cud-
dles the child close to her and pats her
cheek fondly.*

NORA (*stifling her laughter*)

It's nothin' at all, me darlin' Dan;
she was only scairt.

DAN (*sharply*)

Who scairt her?

NORA

Some idiot of a girl at the school told
her the dead-horse wagon wasn't a
heerst at all, but a place they locked
little kids in, and she was tellin' me
and got excited-like.

MINNIE *looks up at NORA, then at
DAN. He holds out his arms and she
wrenches away from NORA and runs to
them.*

May, 1908—6

MINNIE (*as he takes her up*)

Dear ol' pop—you won't let 'em
take me, will ye?

DAN

That's all a fake, baby. The girl
was stuffin' ye. (*Kisses her and snug-
gles her to him.*) Stuffin' ye with hot
air, and if I ever get hold of that girl
I'll—

MINNIE (*as NORA glares at her*)

Ye can't touch her, pop. She don't
live round here.

DAN (*kisses her*)

I won't touch her if you say so,
baby, but you mustn't swallow bluffs
like that. You tell 'em your name's
Minnie Egan and ye ain't no come-on
for nobody—see? (*Lets her down.*)

MINNIE *gets salt and pepper and puts
them on the table.*

NORA (*approaching him seductively*)

D'ye feel queer, Dan?

DAN (*smiling and drawing close to her*)

About the tie-up?

NORA (*looking up, siren-like*)

And when it's done and can't be un-
done ye won't be after tellin' me I
snared ye—will ye, now?

DAN

Ring off, Nora, ring off. (*Kisses
her quickly and draws away from her;
then grabs her hand and becomes sud-
denly serious.*) Say, girl, it's all right
about the baby, ain't it? Ye'll be
good to her? Ye like her, don't ye?

NORA (*cuddling toward him*)

How kin I help likin' her? Ain't
she the spit of yourself?

DAN (*tenderly*)

She's the whole show with me, Nora
—see? If I thought she was going to
get the dirty end in this deal, I'd cut it
out in a minute, understand?

NORA

Have ye ever seen me anything but
nice to her, Dan?

DAN (*meditatively*)

No.

NORA

Ye're a whole lot fonder of her than
o' me, ain't ye?

DAN (*suddenly*)

How d'ye mean? (*Pause.*)

NORA (*glances over at crayon furtively*)

I mean I'm not the first woman ye gave yer heart to.

DAN

What of it? Weren't you married before?

NORA (*with a glance at MINNIE, who is watering plants at window*)

'Sh! (*Nods toward MINNIE.*) It was all misery with him. An' when he died I was glad to be free.

DAN

The day may come when ye'll be glad to see me cash in.

NORA (*laying her hand fondly on his shoulder*)

Ah, Danny, me darlin', little ye know the heart of me! How I was in distress when I moved in across the hall and knew that you and Minnie was all alone; how I longed to come and ask ye to let me work fer ye, to take the love of a child under me wing!

DAN

On the level?

NORA

It was only the blindness of a man that kept ye from seein'. An' when ye told me ye'd pay me to keep house and cook fer ye I could have thrown me arms about ye and cried fer joy.

DAN (*takes her in his arms*)

Ye're losin' steady wages by marryin' me, Nora. (*Laughs.*)

NORA

Small loss, so I have you.
(*Knock at door R.*)

DAN (*turns*)

Who's that?

NORA

Let me go, Dan. (*MINNIE has come down stage, curious.*) It's time ye were havin' a bite o' supper, anyway. (*She goes to door R., opens it and goes out. DAN and MINNIE stand observant a few seconds. NORA returns with a wedding-cake on which the figure is a long truck with six horses, driver, and girders swung under truck. NORA crosses C., holding it up admiringly.*)

NORA

Ain't it imposing?

MINNIE

What is it for, pop?

DAN (*looking down at her shyly*)

It's—it's for us all to eat—it's cake, baby.

NORA

It'd be a sin to eat it. Why, it makes me think of Dreamland.

DAN

Where'd ye get it?

NORA

A dago brought it. He was dressed up in a nightgown and had a nightcap on his head.

DAN (*examining it; picks up card attached and reads*)

The superintendent sent it. (*Reads:*) "With best wishes for a long life and prosperity."

MINNIE (*puzzled*)

Are you goin' to lose yer job, pop?

DAN

Does look funny, don't it, baby?

NORA (*holding it up*)

I could carry it for years and not be tired.

MINNIE

Why, it's a photograph of you, pop, drivin' the big truck!

NORA (*counting the horses*)

They've only got six horses and the supe ought to know you can handle tin as though they wuz a goat wagon in the park.

DAN (*laughs*)

That's all right, but I can't wait much longer fer something to eat.

NORA

Dan, I'm nearly crazy, I'm so happy. (*Lays cake on table.*) Whin a woman's in love she never thinks of eatin', but a man—

DAN

I can't help it, Nora, if I'm hungry after a hard day's work. I've always been that way.

Smiling and looking back at him archly she hurries off R. He gazes after her until MINNIE touches his hand. He looks down at her and she leads him toward window U. R.

MINNIE

Pop, one o' them geraniums is sick, I think. It looks all sleepy and falling-down like. (*They examine plants. He touches the fading one. He sits in sunset glow, back to window, holding MINNIE on his knees.*)

DAN

We'll have to get a new one the next time the man comes round. (*Cuddles her to him.*)

MINNIE (*looks up*)

Are you really going to marry Mrs. Dervin, pop?

DAN

Sure, kid. I told her to tell ye. I felt—well—ye see—a man ain't built to talk about such things. He feels kind of silly. Are you sorry?

MINNIE

Well—I thought you'd wait till I got through with school and then you'd marry me.

DAN

Ha! ha! You're a mysterious kid, you are! What put that in yer head?

MINNIE

Won't I be able to cook and scrub and wash just as good as her when I'm grown up? My hair ain't red like hers, but there's a girl in school, her hair is red and they call her "House on Fire." Besides, I knew you before she did, didn't I? And don't you think I love you, too? (*Reaches up and, clasping him, kisses him several times.*)

DAN

Sure you love me. I love you, baby, better than anybody in the world.

MINNIE

Not better than mama, do ye?

The reminder strikes DAN's heart with a chill. He lets MINNIE down, gets up, glances at crayon, then out the window, musingly. She follows his movements and stands beside him, wonderingly looking up at him.

DAN

D'ye think she'd mind me gittin' married, baby?

MINNIE

I don't think she'd mind if ye married me.

DAN (*laughs sadly*)

Why?

MINNIE

'Cause she used to tell me when she was sick, "Always stick to papa, baby, and take care of him."

DAN (*tears in his eyes*)

That's three years ago. You were only seven then. Three years—gee!

(*Despairingly.*) She ought not to have gone away, baby.

MINNIE

* We'll see her again, won't we?

DAN (*startled and puzzled*)

Some people say we will; some—
(*pauses in question. NORA bursts in from door R. carrying a cheap, gaudy lamp with gaudy shade.*)

NORA

Will ye look at this fer a weddin' present?

DAN (*suddenly whirled about in his thoughts*)

Where'd ye get it?

NORA

From Bausch, the grocer.

MINNIE

Fer nothin'?

DAN

That Dutchman will be sore on himself fer a week when he wakes up and finds what he's done.

NORA (*surveying it*)

It's real elegant, though. (*She lays it on table. She steps back and looks at the effect.*) Ain't it, now?

DAN

Sure. (*He keeps his air of abstraction, which she notices.*)

NORA

I know what ails ye, me dear, ye're famished. Come, Minnie, we'll fetch the supper.

DAN

I guess that's right. I'll wash up and eat somethin'. (*NORA and MINNIE go off R.; DAN looks at crayon, fixes black scarf draped over a corner of the frame, then goes to sink, where he washes face and hands and combs his hair. Meanwhile MINNIE and NORA come back from door R., and put meat and potatoes on table.*)

DAN (*at sink*)

What's fer tonight?

NORA

Yer favorite.

DAN

Irish turkey?

NORA

No. Irish terrapin. Pig's cheek and boiled chicken.

MINNIE

An' here's a coffee-cake, too, pop.

DAN

Out o' sight! I could eat a horse.
Get the pitcher, Minnie.

MINNIE

Which one?

DAN

The big one. We'll make it a quart
tonight. (MINNIE goes into room at L.)

NORA (laughs)

I don't want a thing to eat, Dan, but
my, what a thirst I have! (As DAN
comes down C. washed and combed she
goes up to him and takes his hand.)
My handsome Dan!

DAN

It begins to look as if I was yours,
don't it?

NORA

When did Father Murphy tell us to
be at the church?

DAN

Eight o'clock, I think. We'll have
to hurry. Say, Nora, how much d'ye
think he'll charge?

NORA

Sure he'll take what ye give him.

DAN

A "V"?

NORA

Five dollars?

DAN

I can't afford any more.

NORA

Well, I should say so. Mary Dunphy
told me that Jim only gave him two
dollars when they were married.

MINNIE (coming from room with wash-
pitcher)

Here's the growler, pop.

DAN (taking pitcher)

I guess I'll tell Hogan to come round
afterwards.

NORA

The bartender?

DAN

He has a fiddle.

NORA

Tell him to bring the fiddle and I'll
ask the Dempseys up to do some steps
wid us. Off wid ye fer the beer and
I'll dress the child. (DAN goes toward
R. and NORA into room at L. to get
MINNIE's dress.)

MINNIE (detaining him at door)

Pop!

DAN

Want a bretzel?

MINNIE

When ye're married, pop, will ye live
with her across the hall?

DAN

Sure.

MINNIE

An' I'll be left here all alone?

DAN

I guess not. You'll come wid us.

MINNIE

Will there be room?

DAN (kneeling down and kissing her)

There'll always be room for you,
baby—see? (She puts her arm around
him and hugs him passionately, throb-
bing all through. NORA comes out
from L., carrying MINNIE's dress in her
hand.)

NORA

Fer heaven's sake, Minnie, let yer
father get the beer or we'll be late at the
church. (DAN gets up and goes out R.
with pitcher, with last look at MINNIE.
NORA comes and takes MINNIE's arm,
leads her to sink, where she washes her,
combs her hair and is dressing her.)
Come, child, till I make you look
decent. (Takes off her dress and pro-
ceeds to wash her face, wets her hair,
then combs it into curls.)

MINNIE (as dress is jerked off over her
head)

Ouch!

NORA

Wot's ailin' ye now, Miss Minnie?

MINNIE

A button scratched my face.

NORA

Keep yer face out o' the way and it
won't get scratched.

MINNIE

How kin I? You go so quick.

NORA

Do you know why? Becaz I'm in a
hurry—see? (Laughs brutally.) Ha!
ha!

MINNIE

Why are ye in a hurry?

NORA

Ye'll be gettin' married yerself some
day—and to a fat Dutchman, too, or I
miss my guess. Then ye'll know, me
lady.

MINNIE

I ain't never goin' to leave my papa.

NORA

Oh, ho! is that yer tune? Well, give us time, that's all I say.

MINNIE

He said so.

NORA (as she dries her face)

Look a-here, now, ef I ever ketch ye makin' him black again I'll shake the sauerkraut out o' ye—thoind now. (Shakes her.)

MINNIE (crying)

I didn't say nothin'.

NORA

Dry up, now—d'ye think I kin be wipin' yer face all night? Hard enough it is to make the likes o' ye decent and the water pouring out o' ye in this unnatural heat. (MINNIE dries her face with towel and NORA wets her hair and tries to put it in curls.)

MINNIE

Ouch! that hurts! (Jerks herself away.)

NORA (dragging her back)

Hurts, does it? You just bide a while or I'll hurt ye.

MINNIE (trying to pull away)

Leave me be!

NORA

Will ye let me curl yer hair, ye brat, ye?

MINNIE

I don't want it curled. (Pulling away.) My mama—

NORA (in a rage)

Yer mama, is't. Sass me wid her name, will ye? (Hits her a sharp blow on head. MINNIE utters a stifled scream and falls, striking her head against the stove. She lies quite still for a moment, NORA watching her, aflame with anger. Then NORA looks at door R. Goes over to it; listens. MINNIE gets up, puts her hand to her head, which is bleeding, and goes toward door L. into bed-room. NORA follows her.) Come here, me child. Will ye be nice now?

MINNIE (running off L., her hand to her head)

I want my mama! My mama

NORA (looking back at door R. fearfully, as she goes toward door L.)

Aisy, me darlin'—ye'll make yerself sick if ye run so in this weather. (Follows her in. MINNIE's voice is heard crying.)

MINNIE

I want my mama!

NORA (off)

I'm yer mama now, dear. Be quiet, child. (Sobbing of MINNIE heard off. NORA appearing in doorway at L., looking back into room.) I'll fix yer head in a minute. Sure, ye'll look grand at the weddin'. (NORA goes to sink, soaks towel in water and carries it back to room at L. Confused murmur of their voices gradually becoming lost. At door, looking back at her.) That's a bad head ye've gct, child, ye'll have to keep awful still—not a move out of ye. 'Tis so God punishes bad children fer their behavior.

MINNIE (off)

Tell papa to come here when he brings the beer.

NORA (closing door)

I will, me girl.

MINNIE (off)

It's dark. I want the door open.

NORA (opens door)

The light's awful bad fer ye. Be good or I'll get an ambulance fer ye. (Shuts door, goes across timidly to door R., opens it and looks out, then disappears. Pause. DAN enters from door R., carrying wash-pitcher full of beer and bottle of whisky. Door has been left ajar by NORA.)

DAN (as he comes in)

Hogan give me a quart of whisky to celebrate. (Looks around and sees no one. Goes toward door at L. Just as he reaches it NORA with a platter and a dish of potatoes enters from R. hurriedly.)

NORA

Dan! Dan! Don't go in there! (He turns, surprised.)

DAN

What's the matter?

NORA (forcing a smile)

Minnie fell fast asleep as I was dressing her, so I laid her on the bed.

DAN

Asleep?

NORA

Sure, it's the heat. It's killin'. I'm wringin'—and in me new dress, too. (*Lays platter and vegetable dish on table.*)

DAN

She ain't sick, is she?

NORA

She sick! Why, she's tough as iron. Sure, she's been playin' all day.

DAN

That's so, this is Saturday. (*Pause.*) Mebbe I'd better get a doctor.

NORA

Foolish man! There's nothin' the matter wid the child. (*Leading him to table from door at L.*)

DAN

I guess ye're right.

NORA

It's you that'll be sick if ye don't have a bit o' supper.

DAN

It's gettin' late, ain't it?

NORA (*goes and looks at clock*)

Half-past seven. I'll light the lamp. (*Takes new lamp off table and lights old, taken from sink shelf. Lays lamp on table.*)

DAN (*sitting down*)

Father Murphy said to be there at eight o'clock sharp.

NORA

Not a foot ye'll stir till ye take a bit o' that cheek and chicken. (*She cuts the meat and heaps his plate plentifully with meat and potatoes. He pours beer into her glass and his.*)

DAN (*taking glass with a serious air*)

Well, happy days!

NORA

Shin—fanel! Shin—fanel!

DAN

Wot's that mean?

NORA

Ourselves! Ourselves!

DAN (*drinking.*)

It's a go!

NORA (*after draining her glass*)

My, what a hot night! (*DAN fills the glasses again.*) Where'd ye get the whisky?

DAN

Hogan gave it to me.

NORA

It's you're the popular man, Danny.

DAN

He'll be round about nine o'clock when he gets off.

NORA

I didn't ask the Dempseys yet. I will on our way out. (*Pause. NORA eats a little, but is more interested in watching him. He nibbles a bit, but without heart. He sips his beer occasionally.*)

NORA

Sure, ye don't eat, man, and I made such a fine dinner—expensive, too.

DAN

Ah—it's too hot to eat. I'm goin' to smoke. (*Gets up and gets match from mantel-shelf. Casts a glance toward crayon portrait of his wife. Takes box of cigarettes from his pocket. Lights one, still looking at picture. Sits at table.*)

NORA (*notices his study of the crayon*)

It's the rotten cigarettes that spoils yer appetite.

DAN

It's all settled, ain't it? If we get married I smoke cigarettes—ain't that what I said?

NORA

Sure, me darlin'. I was only teasin'. (*Breaks into chorus of song.*)

"Teasing, teasing,
I was only teasing you—"

DAN (*pouring beer into her glass*)

Have a drink. I don't feel like hearin' songs.

NORA (*pulling her chair beside him and leaning against him anxiously*)

Nor I, Dan. I just want to be close and hear yer great heart thump—thump—thump fer me.

DAN

And the kid—don't forget her.

NORA

It's like me to forget her when I love her as though I brought her to ye meself. (*She lays her head against his cheek. He drops his cigarette, puts his face against her hair, quite overcome with emotion. Pause.*)

DAN (*raising his head*)

If ye're good to her I'll be satisfied.

NORA (*standing and putting her arms about his neck*)

An' ye'll never go back on me, will ye, Danny?

DAN (*standing and taking another cigarette*)

Go back on ye? I never went back on no one that gave me a square deal.

DAN *lights cigarette over chimney of lamp on table. Moonlight gradually shows in room. He looks at her scrutinizingly. She comes round.*

NORA (*cuddling close to him*)

When ye look at me that way I feel I'd like to die, I'm so weak with joy.

He puts his arm about her and kisses her passionately. Suddenly he raises his head.

DAN

Say, Nora, I'm goin' to take a look at Minnie—just fer a second.

NORA

Dan, me boy, would ye wake the poor, tired child?

DAN

I won't wake her. (*Goes toward door.*)

NORA (*taking his arm*)

Listen, Dan.

DAN (*wrenching his arm free*)

Don't hold me.

NORA

'Sh! Darlin'. (*Smiling.*) I can't keep me hands off ye. An' ye blame me fer that.

DAN (*penitent*)

Oh—that's all right. I jist kinder forgot.

NORA (*patting his hand and looking up archly*)

It's ten minutes of eight—me dear.

DAN

Gee—we better drive on.

NORA

Is everything all right?

DAN

I guess so. Ye're goin' to wear a hat, ain't ye?

NORA

And a new one, too. A pretty penny it cost—(*goes to table and takes hat, which she proceeds to adjust in front of mirror over sink*) but such a man's worth a crown o' diamonds. (*Ogles him.*)

DAN

Gee! That reminds me—

NORA (*looking around, surprised*)

What is it?

DAN (*fingering in his pocket, pulls out ring*)

It's all right, but I won't be easy till I hand it over, Nora. It's like carryin' stolen goods.

NORA

Have ye got the money for the priest?

DAN

Sure.

NORA

Let's have a glass o' beer, then, and we'll be over there in five minutes. (*NORA pours beer in his glass and in hers. Brings his glass to him.*)

NORA (*toasting*)

Here's your toast, Dan. "Happy days!"

DAN

Happy days! (*They drink all at one draught.*) Nora!

NORA

Yes, darlin'.

DAN

I'm goin' to sneak in here just fer one look at her little face. (*Going toward door L.*)

NORA

An' wake her up, an' she tired. She'll want to come—we're late now. What'll the priest say? He told you eight sharp. (*Business of her pulling and dissuading him; he leaning other way and tormented with doubt.*)

DAN (*pulls out his watch*)

He did say eight sharp. He said he had a sick-call to make right after—

NORA

A sick-call, an' ye stand here mebbe keepin' him from goin' to the sick-call—the man may be dyin', an' ye told him ye'd come.

DAN

That's right. Where's my hat? (*Grabs his hat. She takes his arm fondly.*)

NORA

My handsome Dan!

DAN (*looking back at door L.*)
Suppose she wakes up?

NORA

There's light here an' she'll know
we're at the church.

DAN

Will it take long?

NORA

As if I could say. (*Looks up at him
kittenishly.*) I think, though, we'll be
back in time to finish the beer. (*They
go toward door R. DAN goes out first.
NORA takes key out of inside of door and
puts it outside. Just as she is closing
door MINNIE appears in doorway L.
with towel wrapped about her head.
Slight spot of blood on towel.*)

MINNIE (*crying*)

Papa! Papa! (*at door R. and half
off.*)

DAN

Nora, she's callin' me.

NORA

I'll lock the door. She'll be all right.

MINNIE

Don't go! Don't go!

DAN

I'll see her just fer a minute.

NORA (*trying to lock the door*)

Ye'll be late to the priest, an' the
sick man may die.

MINNIE

Papa! Papa!

DAN

I tell ye I won't be a minute.

NORA

An' the sins o' that dyin' man will
be on yer head.

DAN (*brushing her aside and bursting
into room*)

The dyin' man be damned! I want
to see Minnie before I go. (*Rushes
across stage. NORA stands in doorway
terrified. DAN stops abruptly as he sees
bandage on MINNIE's head. As she
sees him stop, MINNIE runs toward him.*)

MINNIE

Don't leave me, papa, don't leave
me!

DAN (*kneeling down beside her and ex-
amining the bandage*)

What's happened to ye, baby?

NORA

The dear child!

DAN (*looking back at NORA*)

Wait a minute—one at a time.

MINNIE

I fell against the stove.

DAN (*to NORA*)

You said she was asleep.

NORA (*coming up to C.*)

Sure, I didn't want to alarm ye,
Dan, and our having so little time—
the priest waiting and the sick-call—

DAN

What do I care for the sick-call?
Supposin' she died—hey?

NORA

Have sense, Danny darlin'! It's
only a scratch.

DAN (*lifting the bandage up*)

You lie! It's bleedin'. (*MINNIE
shrinks away from his touch.*)

NORA

It can't be. There's some witch-
hazel over the sink. (*Goes to sink and
gets bottle, which she gives to him.*)

DAN (*bathing wound*)

Don't cry, baby. This will make it
better.

NORA

She'll forget all about it in the morn-
ing.

DAN

Don't fool yourself. She's goin' to
have a scar there or I don't know
nothin' about cuts.

MINNIE

That stuff burns awful, pop.

DAN

I won't put no more on now, baby.
How'd you come to fall?

NORA

She was—

DAN (*sharply to NORA*)

Shut up, will ye?

MINNIE (*leans close to her father and
sobs*)

DAN

What's the matter, Minnie?

MINNIE

I'm afraid.

DAN

Afraid o' what!

MINNIE

To tell you.

DAN

I won't lick ye, baby. Tell me.

MINNIE (*after hesitation*)

Mrs. Dervin was fixing my hair, and

she hurt me, and then I tried to get away and she hit me and I fell.

He stands up, glaring at NORA.

NORA

The child nearly drove me crazy with her antics.

DAN

You come to bed now, Minnie. *(Leading her to room at L.)*

MINNIE

You won't go 'way, will ye, pop?

As they disappear into room, DAN's voice is heard soothing her. Then he comes on from door L., shuts door softly. Looks at NORA hard and cold.

DAN *(glaring at NORA)*

You're a nice lobster, ain't ye?

NORA *(rather nervously clasping her hands)*

Sure, I meant no harm to the child.

DAN

It's a wonder you wouldn't hit some-one in yer own class.

NORA

I jist touched her and she went over.

DAN

Why wouldn't she, you big lummicks with a hand like a pile-driver. *(DAN goes up stage to lay witch-hazel over sink.)*

NORA *(following and becoming supplicant)*

Ye have no call to talk to me that way, Danny.

DAN *(turning on her sharply)*

Ain't I? Wait and see if I ain't!

NORA

How can I be a good mother to the child if I don't make her mind?

DAN *(laughs sneeringly)*

So that's the way! The kid must have been havin' a daisy time all these months with you.

NORA

Ain't I tellin' you it was an accident?

DAN

Wot the blazes do I care? You hurt her, didn't ye?

NORA

She'll be all right in the mornin'. It's sleep she's needin'.

DAN *(with implied meaning)*

Um! That's what you say.

NORA

Come along, now, Danny dear; re-

member the priest's waitin'—*(lays her hand on his arm)*

DAN *(freeing himself)*

An' the man o' the sick-call's dyin'—what do I care?

NORA *(approaching him again)*

Danny, dear, calm yourself.

DAN

I'm calm all right. I'm lookin' at this game now just as though I was sittin' on the outside.

NORA *(cajoling)*

Of course y'are. Come along now, Danny. In ten minutes it will all be over, me boy.

DAN

It's all over now—see?

NORA *(in sudden alarm)*

Dan—Dan Egan—are ye mad?

DAN *(coldly)*

Say, wot d' ye take me for?

NORA *(falling against him and clutching him about the throat)*

Ah, Dan, Dan, how kin ye talk so when me heart cries fer ye?

DAN *(trying to disengage her)*

Keep off, I tell ye!

NORA *(holding him tighter)*

Me arms ache to have hold o' you, an' me mouth's a-fever fer yer kiss, Dan, fer yer kiss. *(Pause.)*

DAN

Let me go, you—you—the devil's in ye. *(Wrenches himself free. NORA staggers back, dismayed at the wild look in his eye.)*

NORA

Ye'd put disgrace on me, would ye?

DAN *(struggling fiercely within himself)*

I'm done wid ye.

NORA

An' ye'll have me shamed before the whole parish? An' yourself? An' the child? *(Comes toward him again.)*

DAN *(turns away)*

I'm done wid ye!

NORA *(approaching behind him)*

Ye can't—ah—I know ye can't.

Ye've wanted me too long—

DAN *(looking at door and as if to himself)*

I'm done wid ye.

NORA *(taking his hand and laying it against her breast)*

Ye want me now.

DAN (*a shudder passes through him. Then he turns on her like a lion*)

Yes I do, but by God, I won't have ye! (*Takes ring out of pocket and steps toward window, through which moonlight is gradually becoming more in evidence.*) There, and I'd chuck you with it, if ye were worth it. (*Flings ring out of window.*)

NORA

Dan! Dan! What's got hold of ye?

DAN

Nothing now. I've got me grip again. I want you to get out—get out, see? and never put yer face in here again.

NORA

Ye've no right. Ye're false, cruel!

DAN

Get out, d'ye hear me? (*Pushes her back toward door R.*) I've done wid ye. Ye're a liar, a devil. Get out, get out!

NORA

Danny, Danny, ye'll kill me! Ye'll kill me! (*He forces her out of doorway, grabs key and locks door on inside.*)

NORA *beats on the other side, moaning.*

Let me in, Dan—let me in!

DAN (*looking at door and shuddering*)

I've done wid ye! (*in stifled tones.*)

MINNIE *appears at L. door in nightgown.*

MINNIE

Ye ain't goin', pop, are ye?

DAN

No, baby. (*Goes toward her.*) Come here, Minnie. I'll take care of ye. (*MINNIE comes to him. He sits on chair and cuddles her close, kissing her and mumbling.*) Baby! My baby girl! (*A knock sounds on door at R. MINNIE starts and looks round.*)

MINNIE

Don't leave me, will ye, pop?

DAN

Never, baby, never!

He gets up and puts out lamp. Then goes toward door at L. MINNIE precedes him into room. Knock at R. again. Then sound as of body falling, and sobs.

DAN (*looking across*)

I'm done wid ye! (*Goes in door L. and shuts door sharply.*)

CURTAIN.



LOVE IN ONE OCTAVE

By Thomas Walsh

SUNDAY, Madge, you seemed so fair,
 Love, the rascal, came to blind me;
 Monday morn I feared your stare;
 Tuesday you thought fit to mind me;
 Wednesday—well, perhaps you'd care;
 Thursday saw your lips resigned me;
 Friday came the solitaire;
 Saturday, the vows that bind me!



MR. SINGERLY—Do you know. that new tune just haunts me.
 MRS. SINGERLY—No wonder—after the way you've murdered it.

THE CALL

By Clinton Scollard -

O 'ER violet-dotted height and king-cup hollow
The Spirit summons, and I fain would follow.
I need no staff,
'Tis prop enough to hear the rushes laugh,
And, jocund, see
The frolic of the leaves upon the tree
Whate'er it be,
Or gracile elm or supple hickory!
I am aware all nature feels with me
The impulse of the call;
The vine upon the wall
Raptures and thrills to every tendril tip,
And cherry chalices, sweetly virginal,
Pulse to the very lip.
Yellow and red and rippling russet throat
Have caught the mandate note,
And, while I hearken,
From birchen coppices that greenly darken
'Tis fluted with ecstatic variation;
And lo! the fleet elation
Kindles along the swale-lands where unfold
The torches of the bright marsh-marigold!

The trilliums ethereal trumpets blow—
What ho! what ho!
Below,
Even the tiny creepers of the sod
Have listened and responded;
Wry-rooted mandrakes beck and nod;
The ferns are freshly fronded;
Agile ephemeræ, winged with fluttering gauze,
Tingle and tremble,
Circle afar, updart, and re-assemble
As though in key with earth's melodious laws.
Over the pebble
The rhythmic water tinkles with new treble;
Swift-fluttering Psyche, as in keen delight,
Beguiles the fancy with strange loops of flight
The shy moth apprehends in the lush shade;
The mosses shimmer with a livelier luster;
Mushrooms upleap in sudden creamy cluster,
And lichens shine, in silvery gloss arrayed.

O fragrant fires,
 Sprinkled with vernal incense! O desires
 Renascent, with your billowy resurgence,
 Your all-imperious urgency,
 You teach me how the soul of man aspires!
 Spirit, like Truth,
 Keeps its eternal youth,
 And quickeneth me until I fain would follow
 O'er violet-dotted height and king-cup hollow!



WHEN CUPID COUNTS THE DOLLARS

ETHEL buried her face in the great bunch of violets and blushed prettily. Wasn't he a dear, thoughtful fellow? And wasn't it perfectly lovely to be remembered on all occasions? How lyrical of Spring days and happy woodlands was that fresh, damp fragrance! The quick tears started to her eyes. Flowers meant more to her than to most people. What could be sweeter and more altogether delightful?

But suddenly the happy face became grave. A persistent realization had been forcing itself upon her of late—a very prosaic, mundane realization, to be sure, but one which could not be wholly ignored. Poor Paul! he was entirely too extravagant. If she did not protest, where would it all end? Well, he would never save anything, that was all. She would simply have to make him economize.

That night, after the theatre, when Paul suggested a supper at a fashionable restaurant she demurred, and a cup of chocolate at the drug-store was finally agreed upon. It was really quite nice, after all, for they reached home much earlier than usual.

When the cuckoo-clock had finally hooted him from the drawing-room, Ethel mounted the stairs with a happy smile. She had been really sensible and Paul would like her all the more for it. Dear boy!

In his apartment Paul sat for a long time with his feet upon the table, glaring into the opposite calendar. He was in an unusually thoughtful mood.

"That's a new wrinkle with Ethel—rather an ominous sign, I take it. Oh, the deuce! Maybe she wants me to save my money for mission furniture and gas bills! By Jove, when a girl begins to economize it's time to duck. Ethel, dear old girl, farewell!"

ANDREW ARMSTRONG.



"OUR grocer has an attachment on his scales that rings an alarm bell whenever he gets an overweight on them."

"How do you know—have you ever heard the bell?"

THE SHOCKING OF FELICIA

By Catherine Carr

THE root of the whole affair was the inopportune arrival of Felicia's letter; from which you can reflect upon what mighty contests arise from trivial things, if you're like that; or at any rate, that you never can tell how things will turn out.

Ordinarily, it would not have appeared to me such a distressing thing that my young cousin should choose to make a career for herself with her voice, for I am a professional woman myself and though my work, being that of an assistant magazine editor, isn't the sort to carve niches in the Temple of Fame, it contents me in the main. But "Felicia's letter day"—we always speak of it as such epoch-marking date—was one of those when all things seem possessed by an exasperating spirit of perversity. It was a wet morning and the coffee was all wrong somehow, and then the chief refused a story that had particularly commended itself to me, with some caustic comments upon my critical faculty—he's a porcupine always, but coming after the inadequate coffee his slings seemed more than usually barbed. Also the mail's outpour on my desk was more inane than even my experience had given me reason to expect, and by evening I was in that dour and dismal state of mind which could look envy upon the humble home interiors revealed by the Elevated's intimate rush past flat windows where women and children watched for the "man's" coming.

This, as I said, was very unusual with me. I am very comfortably situated in a pleasant apartment which I share with most congenial companions—Rosalie Brewster, whose short stories

are becoming noticed, and Isabel Malory, an illustrator; and the "man proposition" seldom obtrudes itself, my companions being as satisfied with the single path as I; but by a singular twist of fate I found their mood to be very like my own when I reached home.

An editor had insisted on an illogical happy ending, which always makes Rosalie furious, and the writer whose book Isabel was illustrating was "a perfect old fuss-cat," she declared, and independence was totally lacking in roseate hues. Hence there was, quite naturally, no response among us for Felicia's enthusiastic communication, which I unwisely read before dinner.

DEAREST COUSIN ELEANOR [it ran. The "dearest" wasn't underscored, but you just knew that she'd say it that way:] You will probably be much surprised by the contents of this letter, for if you remember me at all, it is as a little girl, but I assure you that I'm quite grown-up; twenty-one in February. Plenty old enough to know my own mind, though Uncle Hugh and Aunt Nancy seem to consider it a high crime to have an opinion of your own at such an age; and that is why I'm writing to you. *You* will understand and sympathize, I know, for you are making your place in the world and will not think my ambition to be a famous singer a terribly reprehensible thing.

I really *can* sing, and I feel the call of a career too strongly to refuse it, but uncle and aunt cannot or will not understand. They want me to marry a young man whom I have known all my life, and he is really nice enough in his way, though he is commonplace and has old-fogy notions about home being a woman's proper sphere. You know the kind, and you can see how impossible it is for me to consider him, even if he has millions. But they won't, and they don't any of them give me a moment's peace here, so I am coming to New York to study and to stay with you, dear Cousin Eleanor, if you will have me.

I don't get my money until I am of age, but my allowance will cover my share of expenses,

which I insist on paying, and I shall try not to be of any trouble to you. Indeed, I'm quite capable of looking after myself and only ask for your chaperonage to keep those at home from worrying about me.

With much love and appreciation of your sympathy, of which I feel sure,

Your cousin,

FELICIA HAMPTON.

P. S. I have such confidence in your comprehension of the situation that I am not going to wait for a reply, but am going to start Thursday. I am just starving for sympathy in this alien atmosphere, and cannot bear it any longer. I will wire you later the train on which I shall arrive.

Well, when I had read it I sighed clear from my toes, and then I read it to Rosalie and Isabel and they groaned in unison.

"A career—the call of a career! Oh, Lord!" Rosalie muttered, kicking over a footstool, and Isabel said, "Poor little idiot," with the kick in her tone.

I did not resent this depreciation of my kin. It was the thing that quite had my sympathy and comprehension.

"Of course," I assented, "but what's to be done? She's already on the way and I couldn't very well telegraph her not to come if she wasn't. And if I don't have her here, it's evident that she'll try looking out for herself, as she thinks herself capable of doing. Fancy the child—having lived all her life in a little Southern town where you can't go to the next-door neighbor's after dark without an escort, loose in New York. Of course, it can't be allowed—though I'm sorry. I hope she won't be troublesome—nor bother you-all, any—"

"Oh, *that* isn't it," Rosalie hastened to assure me. "It's only as you say—the poor child. What a wreck of illusions there is in store for her! A career!" she repeated mournfully.

"Starving for sympathy," Isabel quoted. "She may thank her lucky stars if she never starves for anything more material."

"Oh, she will have some money when she's of age, though a musical career takes an awful lot; but—it's awful to think of her going into it. We'll have to do what we can to make her understand how little of the glitter is gold," I said. "Though," I reflected,

"I'm afraid our being engaged on what she regards careers ourselves will detract from the force of any argument we may make. She'll not understand how *we* have made a virtue of necessity."

"That's very likely," Isabel agreed.

"But we *must* do something. We can't let her sacrifice her beautiful youth to the pursuit of such a will-o'-the-wisp," Rosalie urged. "It would always reproach me; and we'll have to hurry up about it. Someone else may capture the millionaire."

We all recognized the possibility and its awfulness, and throughout dinner we discussed the matter exhaustively, being entirely agreed in the desire and intention of discouraging Felicia's ambition, yet unable to decide upon convincing argument.

"It's just as you say," Isabel repeated. "If we tell her how much one has to pay for even the smallest bit of—recognition—not to mention fame—and how empty it is when you've won it; and how much better it is to make a home for a man than to fight for one's place in the outside world, she'll be very apt to turn on us and ask us why we didn't choose that lot ourselves."

"Which," Rosalie acknowledged with an air of superhuman candor, "will force me to the humiliating confession that I was never given the opportunity. I lived between the desert and the sown," she explained, "too poor for the one and too well-born for the other—about the worst luck that can befall one."

"Oh, I know," I corroborated. "I went through it myself—and if you're going to make this a confessional, I shall have to admit that I was never entreated—they always entreat, I understand—never entreated, either."

Isabel looked reflectively at her coffee-spoon.

"There was a young man," she said, "who once invited me to go to a picnic, but I couldn't afford a new dress, so I didn't get to go. And his people objected, anyhow."

Isabel's father had been a section

boss and she wisely made no attempt to conceal her humble origin.

Rosalie and I nodded sympathetically. We had heard of the young man before, and had comprehension of the sadly "might-have-beeness" of the reflection.

"So of course," I said, "there was nothing for us except careers. But will *she* appreciate the situation?"

We perforce left the question open, and by-and-bye we went to bed, all of us dull and much oppressed by the obligation we felt the care of a career-seeking young woman would put upon us. My relationship naturally made my duty most exacting, and I was long in getting to sleep because of it. I did at last, however, and was in the middle of an absurd dream of walking barefoot with Felicia through the Metropolitan Museum, when I was awakened by Rosalie shaking my shoulder and excitedly crying, "Wake up, Eleanor, wake up—I've got an idea."

That's the way with literary people; they break out in the most unlikely places, though I must say Rosalie really very seldom inconveniences other people by her ebullience.

I sat up, blinking and yawning. "Goodness!" I muttered, "won't it keep?"

"No—I can't sleep till I tell you. It's about your Cousin Felicia."

"Oh!" Then I *was* awake.

"Yes—and it's really a splendid idea."

"Do tell me," I insisted, "or wait until I call Isabel—"

In answer to my call Isabel wrapped herself in a red kimono and came in and sat on the foot of my bed with her feet tucked up under her, blinking a good deal, too, but obviously interested.

"Well—out with your life-saving scheme," she advised.

"It is really simple," Rosalie explained. "It's strange that we didn't think of it before. Of course she's an unsophisticated, carefully reared young thing." She looked at me for corroboration and I nodded.

"Of course," I said.

"Well, we'll just shock her so that she will be disgusted with people with careers and run back home to the millionaire, glad enough to marry and 'live happily ever after.' We'll rouge and smoke cigarettes and drink cocktails—"

"Hold on," I expostulated. "Remember that I am due at an office every day. I draw the line at some things."

"Oh, you needn't drink enough to hurt. One cocktail will sustain the principle—and be sufficient to shock her, no doubt. And she's *your* cousin. You should be willing to consider her interests."

"I do," I protested, "but I have my living to consider also. Please regard the high and impeccable standard of *Tellow's*."

"Oh, yes, of course," Rosalie allowed. "You'll have to do the best you can. And we will take her to all the décolleté shows—we'll be rouged so our own blushes won't be seen—and we'll go to bohemian restaurants and do all that sort of thing. You'll see if she won't be disgusted by the end of a month."

"Great scheme," Isabel applauded. "But where will we get the men? It'll be impossible to be properly shocking without men."

"That's so—I never thought of them," Rosalie reflected; and our enthusiasm went into eclipse, for none of us was on familiarly friendly footing with any men.

The necessity of success had driven us all with an urgent hand through our youth, and we had not leisure for the forming of any social relations with the men with whom we came in contact, even had they shown indications of desiring to do so. And, speaking for myself, this had not been frequent.

I don't know that we were so much less attractive than most women of our age—I'm not going to tell what it is. Not that I care, but Isabel and Rosalie figure as "young" writer and illustrator and it wouldn't be fair to them. We really were not bad-looking, now

that we could afford decent clothes, which until lately we couldn't, and use had so bred the habits of social detachment that now when it was no longer enforced it had not occurred to us that change would be pleasant or desirable.

We could see, however, quite plainly, that men were necessary for the working out of Rosalie's inspiration, and we anxiously reviewed our scant masculine acquaintance.

"There's my cousin, Julian Murdoch," Rosalie said at last. "He's certainly capable of shocking anyone."

Nothing could have so proved Rosalie's interest in Felicia as this, for she and her Cousin Julian had about as much in common as a cat and a goldfish. He was manager of several musical comedies, and as she said, he had large capabilities by way of doing shocking things—or so it appeared to us. Rosalie and he met only on rare occasions, and then they nearly always disagreed, but she thought she could endure him for Felicia's sake—Rosalie has a regular ingrowing New England conscience about anything she thinks is a duty—and she was sure he would join in the plot for the possible material he might get out of it. He was always roaming the earth for material and always going to write a play, but he never did. He found it more profitable, I suppose, managing those of other people. Certainly he had a genius for booming both plays and players.

Isabel had no convenient relative to press into service, but she finally concluded that she might venture to invite Melden Drew's interest in the scheme. He was a rising writer of introspective, analytical things, some of which Isabel had illustrated. She remembered that he had been quite nice and approachable, and the psychological quality involved might be depended upon to appeal to him; but I searched my perspective vainly for a man with whom I was on sufficient terms of intimacy to ask him to take part in the shocking of Felicia.

My work was of even more restricted

sphere than theirs, for they did, on occasion, meet writers and artists and editors, while my masculine circle was confined to the magazine's staff of staid men of middle life, most of them married, and I was forced to leave the next morning rather hopeless of being able to secure a fellow-conspirator.

I felt very badly about it. As Rosalie said, Felicia was *my* cousin, and the obligation was more mine than theirs; and goodness knows, I realized how essential it was that she should be saved from a career that morning.

The coffee had been better, but it was still raining and I had to hang to a strap on a crowded car; and my feet got stepped on and my hair was all blown into little sticky wet straggles. I kept thinking of home things all the time—for Felicia, of course—and I was in a rather desperate mood by the time I reached the office.

Certainly I must have been crazy to do what I did. I had just got off my coat and hat and pinned back the straggles of my hair, when David Pendleton came into the cubby-hole of my sanctum to wait until he could see the chief, and the wildest inspiration leaped into my brain.

To realize its utter wildness you must know that Mr. Pendleton is a very great man. He is known nearly all over the world for his sociological investigations, and he was then doing a series of articles for *Tellow's*, receiving for one a sum larger than my yearly salary. Still, he was not at all stiff and he did not confine himself to research and theory. He did a lot of practical private charitable work that he never said anything about, and it had been through a deserving case that I had been able to put in the way of his relief that we had become acquainted. Afterward he would sometimes stop for a little chat as he came and went, and this morning, when he said, as usual, "Good morning, Miss Page—know of any cases for me?" there the idea was, Minerva-like, perfected in every detail, and I said "Yes" quickly, without once thinking what a great man he was. Anyhow, I

knew he was a very good one, if he did appear rather stern and grave, and was always ready to help anyone.

"Yes," I said, "I do, and—and if you don't help me to save her I don't know what to do."

He looked interested at once. He laid his hat down on my desk and drew up a chair.

"I shall be only too glad to be of assistance," he said. "What are the circumstances? Who is she? And—and you wish to save her—from what?"

"She's my cousin, and she must be saved from a career," I poured out all in a breath. Really, that was the only way I could have said it, anyway.

Mr. Pendleton stared an instant and then his eyes twinkled, the grave lines of his face seemed to break up and he put back his head and simply roared. No doubt it did sound funny to him. He could scarcely be supposed to see how serious a matter it really was.

"A career!" he repeated when he got back his breath. "Well, I think it desirable myself, but, you will pardon my saying it, the notion comes strangely from you who are somewhat in the pursuit of a career yourself."

"Yes, I know," I assented, "it does seem so, but really that is just the reason. I know how hard it all is, and I don't want her to go into it. She's young and pretty and there's a millionaire begging her to marry him, so there's no sense in it."

"No sense at all," Mr. Pendleton agreed, "though I should not have thought you to be impressed by the millions."

"Oh, not by *just* the millions," I assured him. I didn't want him, of course, to get the idea that I was mercenary, "but she admits that he is very nice, 'in his way,' she puts it, whatever that may mean; but he objects to an operatic career for his wife and she 'feels its call,' she says."

"I see; and you want to defeat this same call. You can depend upon me to do all I can to discourage her; still, I warn you that it isn't likely that she'll listen to either of us. Young people with even a small degree of

talent are apt to go their own gait until experience teaches them their mistake, I've noticed, in spite of all warnings."

"I know that, and that's the reason we're not going to try to argue her out of it. We are going to use more subtle methods." And then I told him of our plan.

He roared again and said that it was Miss Brewster's best inspiration. "But where do I come in?" he asked.

"Why, you see," I explained, "Isabel—Miss Mallory, you know—says that things can't be really—shocking—without men."

"Exactly," he said, his eyes twinkling some more. "Miss Mallory has the true grasp of the situation."

"And I thought—perhaps you wouldn't mind coming occasionally, and going about with us sometimes—and smoking and—acting like the bohemians on the stage, you know—and that sort of thing. All make-believe, of course." I outlined rather vaguely, I'm afraid. "I know it is really—asking a great deal of you—your time is so taken up—but I have so few men acquaintances—and you always seem ready to help one—and I'd appreciate it—beyond everything," I stammered.

It was very hard, I found, to put my reasons for asking him into words, for the truth was it hadn't been from reason at all, but from impulse, and goodness knows when I had acted on impulse before. I could scarcely believe, like the old woman of curtailed petticoat fame, that "I was I."

Mr. Pendleton, however, was mighty nice about it all. If he secretly thought me a little off my head he didn't betray it.

"I have plenty of time," he assured me, "and it is I who am the debtor. All work isn't well for any of us. I was just wishing for some amusement, and now I shall have the satisfaction of enjoying myself and helping in a good cause at the same time. For I think, certainly, that the home career is the highest for women."

The office-boy came in then and told him that the chief had come. I tried to go on with my work, but I had some

difficulty in settling down to it. It was humiliating for Mr. Pendleton to know that I had never had an opportunity to enter the career he approved, and yet I didn't want him to think I had refused it for a professional one. It would make him think me lacking in womanly qualities, I was afraid. I didn't know just how to straighten it out, and it worried me quite a little.

Rosalie and Isabel were tremendously surprised when I told them that David Pendleton had joined in the plot—they knew him only by his widespread reputation—and though they were inclined to doubt his ability to catch the spirit of it, because of his serious appearance, I wasn't a bit uneasy.

In just that little talk I seemed to have come to know him for ever so long, and that twinkle in his eyes assured me that he wasn't a stick, if he did have a mission.

Julian and Melden Drew were reported delighted with the scheme, and Rosalie had a lot of details worked out just as if it was a story-plot, and though Julian does say she hasn't any temperament to balance her talent, she certainly showed that she possessed the sense of scenic value, in the way she rigged up our little "parlor" with flaming posters and a lot of brass ornaments Isabel had borrowed from an artist friend.

I scarcely recognized the room when I came home to dress the next evening to go to the station to meet Felicia. I didn't feel at home at all, but then I did not expect to so long as she stayed, and I was reconciled to it; but the "this-can-be-none-of-I" feeling grew greater when I put on a long red coat, bought because Isabel said it was aggressively becoming, and Rosalie condoned the expense by saying it could be dyed afterward—and set a big plumed hat on one side of my marceled hair, and it was harder to be adjusted to the startling reflection I saw in the glass.

I was almost ashamed to face Mr. Pendleton, who came for me in his motor, but he seemed to take my—embellishments—as all in the game, and he had rather dressed the part, too. He had on a long leather motor-coat of a

brilliant tan and his beard was trimmed to a point; it was really becoming that way, and there were more twinkles in his eyes.

It had taken me so long to get myself up in such ornate manner that we hadn't any time to spare, so we had to make the run to the station too fast for any conversation, but he did say again how perfectly right we were to save Felicia from a career and how glad he was to help.

When she came through the gate and we saw her I'm sure he must have thought more than ever that we were doing a good work. I know I did, for a more ethereal, peaches-and-creamy, April-blossomy slip of a girl couldn't be found if you searched the world over. And when she threw her arms around my neck and kissed me my rouge and my red coat seemed to flay me. Just the look of her was enough, and I had to hold hard to the thought that it was all for her good to sustain the ordeal of knowing that shortly we wouldn't have a shred of reputation in her mind.

She prattled prettily on the way home, about her career and her longing for sympathy, and how glad she was to be with me, "who would understand," and I patted her hand and said, "yes," to everything.

I found myself hoping that they would not give her too complete a shock that first evening, for I wanted to have her with me for a little while; but I might have known that anything Julian Murdoch had any part in would be carried to the limit. Prepared as I was, after we had taken off our wraps and passed through a rattley shell portière into the little "parlor," the scene that met us struck me like a blow.

In the first place, if I had not known that it *couldn't* have been anyone save Rosalie I would never have recognized her. I don't know whether I've mentioned it, but she has silver-blond hair, the kind you see only once in a hundred years, which she wears smoothly parted and coiled at the crown of her head, and her profile is almost classic in its severity, her eyes are pensive and gray and her mouth-corners are a little prim: and

she dresses to match—grays and whites and pale tints. Well, then, figure it to yourself. She had her hair piled up on the top of her head in a tousled, messy knot and a pompadour almost down to her slender brows, which were very distinctly darkened, and her cheeks were crimson. She had on a white *négigée* thing and she was posed in a sinuous sort of knot on a heap of cushions with a cigarette between her fingers. She was holding it rather like a stick of dynamite, but of course that was too subtle a detail to impress Felicia.

Then, over in an improvised cozy-corner—we hadn't had any use for one before—there was Isabel with her hair done so low that it was half-way down her back (we knew that you can't be bohemian and be the least neat about your hair, of course), and her eyes were touched up and her cheeks were glowing, too—though partly from blushes, I didn't doubt, for she had recklessly cut off the top of her black chiffon dress and it was being kept on by will-power, probably, for there were no visible means of support; and Melden Drew was doubled up in an attitude of the extremest sort of devotion beside her, and there were liqueur glasses on a tabouret near them. Julian was at the piano, in a velveteen coat, singing snatches of popular songs out of the corner of his mouth that wasn't pre-empted by a cigarette; and there was I, marceled and rouged, and with a big red rose in the front of my best white net waist. Mr. Pendleton had given it to me, for, he had said, "the finishing touch."

Imagine, please, how Felicia looked standing in the middle of the room, slim and fresh as a dew-damp flower in her trim blue traveling-frock, her light brown braids neatly coiled. Julian just gasped when he looked at her.

"Shades of all ingénues!" he murmured. "She has Edna May left at the post!"

She had, really, and all the rest of them. And fancy, too, how she must have felt, coming from that little conventional place. I'd been raised there myself and I knew just how perfectly

awful it must appear to her. But she had the true Southern respect for hospitality and she betrayed no indication of what I was sure was passing in her mind.

She returned the girls' kisses as cordially as if their lips hadn't been painted—I knew how Rosalie and Isabel felt, and was sorry for them—and she smiled in the sweetest, most childlike manner on the men when they were introduced. And they involuntarily acted as if they were on holy ground. You could see it.

Isabel and Melden Drew made a "rabbit" with a lot of fuss and flourish over a bottle of ale, and after supper Julian and Melden Drew, who is called "the second Henry James" by some of the critics, did an absurd dance. Goodness knows what would have happened to his reputation could they have seen him then, for he surely was a sight. He's over six feet tall and only a few inches wide, and he had on a rose-colored kimono of mine which came but a little below his knees. But he, too, it was evident, had Felicia's good at heart, for he sacrificed his dignity without the least visible reluctance.

Rosalie and Isabel and I were tired and we had headaches from the unaccustomed smoking and eating, but we held a little congratulatory session in the library after Felicia had bidden us a sweetly affectionate "good night." You could see that the child was like that. No matter what she really thought she could not fail in the courtesy that was due us as hostesses.

"Everything went off beautifully," Isabel said. "Who would have ever supposed that Melden Drew could rise so perfectly to the demands of the situation? Wasn't he great? And of course it's worth the trouble—the idea of that angelic creature pursuing a career is just out of the question; but I hope it won't take long for her to get enough of us. Many evenings like this are likely to get on the nerves." And she half-unconsciously spread a table-cover over her shoulders.

"Oh, it won't. You'll see," Rosalie assured her, and as her profession en-

titled her to the comprehension of the subtleties of human nature, we rested secure in her ruling and content with the sense of duty performed in a very ingenious manner.

Well, it was duty that was faithfully performed. The men acted their parts splendidly—I had never supposed that men could be so disinterested, though they insisted that they were enjoying it all immensely, and they really appeared to be—and anyone will concede the ingenuity of the manner—but by-and-bye we began to realize that evidences of the effect Rosalie had so confidently prophesied were mighty slow in developing.

Conversely, it was finally forced upon us—we avoided it as long as possible—that Felicia was taking to our near-bohemianism like a duck to water. Never, if I live to be a hundred, will I forget the first time she produced a dainty enameled cigarette-case and lighted a cigarette. Talk about shocks—I was simply speechless for a moment—and she did it with the most perfect non-chalance.

"Felicia," I gasped, when I could get my breath. "My dear—it will *surely* make you ill—when you're not used to it."

"Oh, but I *am*, Cousin Eleanor," she placidly replied. "I knew, of course, that everyone smoked in bohemia, and so I learned how, privately. They would have thrown all kinds of fits at home if they'd known. I verily believe Jerry, the young man they want me to marry, you know, would have dropped dead. He's so moss-backy. It's such a relief to be out of that narrow, conventional atmosphere," she said, as she tilted back her head and sent up the smoke from her deliciously pursed lips, looking for the world like a Christmas-card angel, impossible as it may seem.

From that, our plot developed boomerang qualities that kept us wondering where we would be hit next. We managed to persuade Felicia to refrain from the cigarettes and the cocktails which we made so much flourish about drinking and surreptitiously emptied into the

grate or jardinière, or whatever receptacle was at hand, because of the harm they would do her voice. She had a very distinct sense of her voice's value, and certainly she *could* sing. Her teacher, in spite of our previous instruction about discouragement, raved over her, telling us that we were "brute-beasts, thin" to try to rob the public of such talent, and it was plain that Julian Murdoch always saw her in an imaginary spot-light.

Our very obvious make-up and Isabel's insufficient gowns did not seem to embarrass my young cousin, though she did not imitate them, possibly because she realized they would not suit her ingénue type. It was dimly dawning upon me that she was scarcely as unconscious as she seemed, and we were much puzzled as to how to proceed.

We held a number of secret conclaves over the matter, which did not, however, include Julian. It was soon clear that his desires did not run parallel with ours, and he wouldn't listen to our expostulations, which proved another complication. Still, Rosalie was tenacious of her "plot." Now that I think of it I suppose she saw it from a professional rather than an individual angle, which is often a trouble with writer-folk, I believe.

Anyhow, she insisted that it was only that Felicia was dazzled by the novelty of the life and that she would shortly swing back to the extreme of revulsion, and Melden Drew agreed with her. They explained it as the inevitable psychological sequence, and I imagine they knew. I wasn't much versed in psychology myself, though my dealing with human nature, particularly feminine nature, had rather led me to the view that it was uncertain to figure on what they'll do.

However, we went on making believe we were reckless bohemians, and though in some ways it was pretty trying—I had to become a sort of lightning-change artist in dressing, for of course I couldn't go to the office decked out with rouge and in a red coat—in other ways it wasn't bad. Mr. Pendleton and I had some interest-

ing talks about the real, vital things of life when we were, apparently, hobnobbing over liqueur glasses, and he often came for me to go with him on his missions; and Isabel, for all the fuss she made about the time she was having to waste, found leisure to take a course of facial treatment, so her objections couldn't have been very deep, and after all it was Rosalie who got to look the most worried and frayed out. This may have been because she felt the responsibility of being the instigator of the affair.

Felicia had come early in December, and then at Christmas things got more mixed up by the arrival of the young millionaire from home. Jerome Hollis was his name, and my first impression when Felicia introduced him was a profound wonder at how she had managed to escape him. He was simply superb to look at, and his jaw-line and chin were about as flexible-looking as armor-plate; though I had come by that time to have a suspicion that Felicia's disposition had the mildly unyielding quality of a bale of cotton. I was very sure of it when I observed her indifference to his manner of settling down "to fight it out if it took all Winter and Summer," too.

"You might as well go home, Jerry," I heard her say. The acoustic properties of our flat are such that what is said in the "parlor" can be heard in the kitchen if you're not careful to speak low. "I'm not going to marry you—now nor ever. I'm going to devote my life to my career."

"Yes—I've heard you say that before," he answered calmly, "but I can't see that it need interfere with my staying in New York."

"Oh, no—not with your *staying*," she granted.

"And your cousin has invited me to call whenever I like."

"I am disappointed in Cousin Eleanor," my ambitious young kinswoman sighed. "I had thought she would understand."

"Perhaps she does," he suggested. But Felicia only replied, "Nonsense!" with considerable edge to her tone.

The Georgian, as Rosalie straightway christened him, accepted my invitation to call and he, very unobtrusively, but resolutely, made himself one of us. That is, he joined us and entertained us with extravagant theatre-parties and dinners at Sherry's, and suppers at the Martin, but he very obviously didn't "belong," and at first his eyes expressed some wonder at our ways; still, his manner was the perfection of courteous deference to us women, and he soon affiliated with Mr. Pendleton and Melden Drew—Julian and he never got beyond formalities; quite naturally, for Rosalie's cousin was devoted hand and foot to Felicia, but the Georgian didn't act sulky about it.

He would pair off with any of us—most often with Rosalie, for she was the extra one, when Felicia would snub him, with all semblance of cheerful content; and we got to like him immensely, though I felt more conscious of my "decorations" when with him than even when with Felicia. And Rosalie and Isabel said that they felt the same.

Well, things went on in this topsyturvy fashion for several weeks. Felicia studied and planned a career that cast Melba's far in the shade, and smiled sweetly upon our outwardly indecorous revels, just as if they were boarding-school orgies; Julian got more and more devoted to her, and Mr. Pendleton and I, when we weren't busy being shocking, made little excursions into the East Side, where I found that he was adored, and learned what a big, broad meaning there was to life. The Georgian, according to Melden Drew, "sat tight and played up to the rules of a game he didn't understand," and Rosalie was extravagantly gay part of the time and then again she had so many corners that you just couldn't miss them all. Isabel, in the meantime, was doing some mighty good work on her drawings for Drew's new book, and was really getting the most out of the affair, for she wasn't harried by the responsibility of being Felicia's relative—Aunt Nancy kept prodding

me up all the time with the most reminding letters about it—nor did she have Rosalie's worry of being the author of the plot.

Of course the longer it went on the more difficult the straightening out loomed before us. To go back to our former sedate habits and clean faces—with just a dust of powder to take off the soap-shine—meant confession to Felicia, and there was no guessing what the effect would be.

Our consultations became more and more anxious, but no conclusion was reached until one night when Rosalie had held what Julian calls "the centre" all evening. I had never known before how brilliant she could be, and though her make-up was too striking for good taste she looked stunning too.

After the men left and Felicia had gone to bed, she came into my room and closed the door carefully, because of the acoustic peculiarity I have mentioned; then, going to the dressing-table, she stood silently looking at her reflection in the glass with a scowl for a few moments.

I had an uncomfortable premonitory shiver down my back, though I didn't say anything and just fussed around getting some things out and putting others away. Yet I was rather taken by surprise when she turned about and, throwing herself on my bed, began to cry. Rosalie is usually the most self-contained person I know.

I tried to get her to tell me what was the matter, but she only gasped incoherent things until she got over the first outburst. Then she sat up and said that she'd never go through another such evening and that she was going to quit masquerading, no matter what the effect was on that perverse little cousin of mine. Just as if it had all been my fault! The literary temperament is just too uncertain for any use, though I will do Rosalie the justice to say that she had only of late developed temperamental idiosyncrasies.

And then all at once she shifted and reproached herself, saying that she would never, never forgive herself, and

she cried some more and got my spread all messy with carmine and kohl, but I felt so sorry for her that I didn't really mind. I did my best to soothe her, and so did Isabel, who tip-toed in, but neither of us could do any good, and when she finally went to her room she had the manner of being resigned to the worst, whatever it might be. We weren't, any of us, quite clear as to its exact nature.

I could not settle down to sleep for a long time. The uncertainty about Felicia was disturbing, and then I remembered that the end of the plot would mean the end of my companionship with David Pendleton. And just then I realized how much it had come to stand for my life, and I felt like crying myself. I don't know but what I did a little—anyway, I've never pretended to be a stock or stone—and I wanted to tell Rosalie just what I thought of the idiocy of trying to apply fictional methods to real life. I reflected, however, that in her present mood even our long-standing friendship wouldn't be likely to endure the strain, so I just tossed about and tried to be reconciled to going back to those evenings when we three women would sit about reading or working, and those dull pleasure-trips without escorts. I didn't like the prospect a bit, though I used not to mind it at all; which shows, I suppose, how easily women can be spoiled.

The next morning Rosalie remained firm, and I went to the office very much disturbed in my mind—so much so that the traces of trouble were evidently visible on my face, for when Mr. Pendleton came that afternoon for me to go with him to the East Side as I had promised, he looked at me quickly and asked me what was the matter.

There was something very comforting in his noticing, for a moment, and then it made the prospect of the future without him seem worse. I evaded the question then, but when we were seated in the car I told him. Things always get harder by postponing them.

"Our scheme—for shocking Felicia, you know—has failed," I said.

"Yes," he nodded, "I've been rather thinking it had."

"And we're going to give up—acting—that way and be ourselves again. And—and—of course, I feel badly about—about Felicia," I explained.

"Oh, I wouldn't worry. She's really gifted and she seems pretty well capable of looking out for herself in spite of her ingénue look," he said consolingly.

"I hope so, I'm sure," I sighed. "And now—now I won't have to impose on—on your good-nature any longer. You've been so kind—giving up your time and doing things you didn't like—that I—that I can never thank you enough," I added.

Mr. Pendleton didn't say anything for a moment. He just turned and looked at me, and I could feel my face getting hot and red; and I had the strangest confusion of impulses to jump up and get off the car, and always to stay there with my shoulder brushing his coat-sleeve.

"Does that mean that you—turn me out?" he asked in a low tone.

"Oh—mercy, no!" I stammered. "It is only that—that I don't want to put further tax on your time and kindness. You'll be welcome, very welcome, any time—if you care to come."

"I *do*," he said, with emphasis. "I care to come very much. The only thing I care for more is for you—you to go—"

"Go!" I repeated, my voice coming through a long, dry throat. "Go—where?"

"Home—with me," he said.

That was just what he said, right there in an Elevated car with people all about us, and for an instant I was furious at fate. It seemed too bad to wait all those years for a proposal, and then to get it under such conditions, but with my next breath I was so happy I didn't care for anything.

I couldn't say a word, but I looked at him and that seemed to satisfy him. A light that fairly irradiated his grave face flashed into his eyes. For a minute it was as if that look wrapped me up, somehow. Soon we got off and went down the steps, still without say-

ing anything. At the foot David hailed a cab, and when we got in we did the only thing that Felicia would have had real reason to be shocked at—and she wasn't there to see. And I didn't want her.

David drew the curtains and he took me in his arms and kissed me, and I kissed him.

I didn't act at all in the orthodox manner, I'm afraid. I didn't wait for him to plead the least bit and was in just as much a hurry to kiss him as he was me. And after all the romances I had censored, too. Candidly, I don't think the romancers know a great deal about it. And though, now that I think of it, he never really asked me to marry him and I never said "yes," it was all settled and it was "paradise enow," in that stuffy cab rattling over the rough pavement.

Then he told me how I fulfilled and made ideals for him, and he blessed Rosalie's plot, and so did I, and the dénouement designed for that evening didn't worry me at all.

Happiness, it is said, makes one selfish, and I admit that after David left me at the door of our flat, to go home to dress for the dinner we were going out to eat together, I dropped into a chair before the library fire and thoughts of my own joy and the ways in which I should make myself worthy of it and of him, pushed aside all consideration of Felicia's future or of Rosalie's nervous remorse.

The voice of the Georgian asking for Miss Brewster brought back to me a realizing sense of our plot's complications and caused me to sit up sharply. Now, whatever my faults, I'm honest, and I'll confess that I *could* have gotten away, and I know that I should, but while I was hesitating and wondering she came in, and he said "Rosalie," just as the first man must have said "Eve." And then there was a sound that made my cheeks and lips grow warm with remembrance, and I positively was stricken motionless. I understood it all—everything: Rosalie's remorse—her tears—her deter-

mination to end the masquerade. But the Georgian and Rosalie—who would have thought it?

"Oh!" she gasped, "I—I must not."

"You didn't. It was I—and I must. I told you that I wouldn't take 'no' for an answer," he said, and you could just hear that armor-plate chin of his in his tone.

"But—but—" Rosalie began again, "you don't understand. You don't know *me* at all. It's all been—a play. I'm not brilliant or—or—beautiful, really. It was"—and her accent was tragedy—"it was—*paint*—and—oh, I forgot."

Being a woman and not a saint I edged my chair about so I could see through the curtains. The Georgian stood there, so broad and tall that he seemed to fill up the room, and Rosalie was facing him, her hand resting on the back of a chair between them. She had on one of her simple long white wool gowns and her hair was done in its usual plain way, but there was a vivid color on her cheeks, coming and going with her breath, and the Georgian's look of mingled tenderness and determination became very understandable.

"Look at me," she said.

"I am looking, it's about all I've done since a week after I met you, if you had taken the trouble to notice," he announced.

"Then—don't you *see*? You don't—care for—*me*. It's the woman you think I am. Clever—and—and dashing—and all that. And I'm *not*—I'm plain—and dull—"

The Georgian reached out and got her hands somehow, though she kept fending him back with them.

"Dear heart," he said, "listen—I *do* know. It is you who don't understand. Just at first I *was* puzzled. The things you did and—your make-up didn't belong with something that showed through, somehow. I can't explain, but I knew, and then I came across your picture in a magazine—just as you are—your dear self, and I asked Pendleton a few questions and he put me wise to your plot to shock

Felicia out of her fancy for a career. And—then—then I knew—*everything*."

He put out his arm to draw her to him, but Rosalie evaded him.

"But Felicia," she said. "You loved her. Can love shift so quickly?"

"No—not *love*—I know now that I never loved Felicia. You see, we have lived next door to each other all our lives, and we'd been sort of sweet-hearts since we were children, and our families had arranged it—I thought it was the real thing, but I found it wasn't—when I saw her with you. Felicia's only a pretty girl, while you—"

"Oh, that's just it," she broke in, with a cry of pain. "I'm *not* a girl any more—I'm a woman—and *old*—and you're young—*young*. I'm older—two or three years older—and that's—*awful*."

She was all of five, but there's no use in being so terribly accurate, and anyhow she didn't look it. Those blond women have the advantage that way.

"*'Awful'*—nonsense!" he scoffed.

"What's a year or a dozen of 'em of *mere* time got to do with love? You're an angel to look at—and your heart's younger than Felicia's this minute—and it is—*mine*—Rosalie?"

She didn't say it was, but she let him take both her hands in one of his own and he pressed them up against his breast and drew her to him with his other arm, and she came, slowly yet without protest. And then my conscience *did* wake up, and I slipped away to my room where I had to dress in a frantic hurry to be ready by the time David was to come for me.

Still, even then, the maid let him in just as I was coming along the hall humming a song and swishing my skirts so as to warn Rosalie and the Georgian of my approach, and we went on into the room together. There, in spite of my precautions, we found them sitting on a settle, he holding her hands and saying worshiping things under his breath, so of course the men congratulated each other at once and we women kissed and cried a little.

We had scarcely got through it when Isabel and Melden Drew came in.

When she saw us she paused at the doorway a moment and then came forward, with a little laugh.

"Oh, you're all here!" she said. "Well, it's as good a time as any, I suppose, to tell it. I'm engaged to—Mr. Drew."

I wasn't really surprised, because all in a flash I had remembered those facial treatments and how of late she had been putting chiffon in the tops of those chopped-off gowns, and I certainly was delighted.

"So am I." "And I!" Rosalie and I exclaimed, springing up, whereat Isabel sat down rather quickly and looked about with a bewildered expression.

"You—both—engaged?" she stammered.

"To me," David and the Georgian explained in one breath, and then the congratulations and kisses were all gone over again. We all laughed and talked at once until the slamming of the elevator door and the sound of Felicia's voice in the hall recalled us women to the unpleasant duty of explanation which lay before us. Rosalie and Isabel and I looked guiltily at one another, but the Georgian switched on the lights and smiled encouragingly upon us.

"Brace up," he murmured. "Remember how *we*'re calling you blessed." And I tried to, but it certainly didn't seem fair to Felicia—to leave her out that way, and I had the feeling of icicles sliding down my back.

Felicia came in, her saint's face rising above her ermine stole, looking as sweetly gentle as usual; yet I, half-unconsciously, caught a sense of aplomb in her manner that was new.

"I'm late, I see," she said, "but I think you'll all forgive me. Punctuality can scarcely be expected when one has just been married."

"Married!" we all fairly chanted, and we stood as if chained. "Married!"

"Yes—to Mr. Murdoch," she said; and then it was perceivable that Julian was forming a sort of background for her graceful figure. I had a lightning thought that such would be his place in her life. "I was twenty-one today, you know," Felicia continued calmly, "but I didn't say anything about getting married because poor dear Cousin Eleanor would have felt it her duty to write to Uncle Hugh about it and that would have made *so* much useless trouble. So we just went to that dear little Church Around the Corner where all you bohemians get married—and avoided any fuss or worry, which was much the better way. And I'm going to Paris to study, and with Julian as manager I shall become famous."

I looked at her, confident and glowing, the vision of applauding multitudes in her beautiful bride-eyes, and underneath her softly curved and tinted exterior I felt the force of that indomitable something which tramples all in the achievement of its aim; which could even make marriage a means to its end, and I believed that the high place of fame would indeed be hers, while we three women of aforetime careers were happy with the beat of home in our hearts.

And it all came about because we tried to save her from a career. You never *can* tell.



MAJORITY RULE

"A TIME will come," said Mrs. Sharp, after a protracted political debate with her husband, "when women will control all elections."

"Never on earth!" shouted Mr. Sharp.

"Perhaps not," said his wife calmly. "I was thinking of heaven."

THE WORM THAT WOULDN'T TURN

By Temple Bailey

"IF only you would show more spirit," said the Silver Lady.

The Worm turned his grave young face up to her.

"But I love her," he murmured.

"And you spoil her," said the Silver Lady, who was all in gray, and whose shining hair matched her gown and gave her her name.

"I cannot compel her to do a thing just because I wish it," argued the Worm.

The thin ivory fingers of the Silver Lady clutched the top of her cane. "A man should be master of his own house," she said severely.

"Ah," breathed the young man, "dear lady, who could be harsh with her?"

"And that's the way it stands," worried the Silver Lady, three hours later, when Jane came in to see her.

Jane was Jane. There could be no nickname to soften the uncompromising cognomen. Jane wore stout boots and tailor-made gowns, and brushed her hair straight back from her fresh young face, and she had ideas about what people should do, and how they should live, and she was not timid about telling them so.

"He always was a fool," said Jane.

The Silver Lady's face softened. "It is because he loves her dearly."

"Oh, my goodness!" said Jane.

"And he is a century behind the times in chivalry," went on the Silver Lady. "In the days of his grandfather women played with hearts, and trampled on men with their little heels, and his father put his mother on a pedestal and worshiped her. But they were women who understood."

"But Harold's wife—?" asked Jane.

"Does not understand," said the Silver Lady.

After a pause she went on: "She is ruining his career, with her whims and caprices, and now this last one is the worst."

"You haven't told me," hinted Jane.

The Silver Lady looked thoughtfully into the fire, which was always built for her, even on warm days, for the Silver Lady had old bones, in spite of her young heart.

"He wants to give a dinner," she said, "to a half-dozen men who can help him to get the contract for the pictures in the new State Building. But she refuses to come down, and she says she hates companies of men, and he will have to make it a stag affair."

"Well, why doesn't he?"

"You know him," the Silver Lady complained. "He will not be at his best with her away."

"Oh, tommyrot!" exploded Jane.

The Silver Lady sighed. "If I were anything but his aunt," she said, "I might reason with her, but it is out of my province."

"She is beyond reason," said Jane grimly.

"If he would only rise in his might and smite her," groaned the old lady, becoming scriptural, and then she apologized, "I mean if he would only make her feel that she *had* to do it."

"He's got to be made to see it that way."

"Who's going to make him?"

"I am," said Jane; "we used to play together when we were children, and he wasn't mean-spirited then, and the boy is father to the man."

"In all other things he is strong," the Silver Lady defended jealously.

"Of course he is," admitted Jane, "but love can make all sorts of a fool of a man. He would have done better to have married me, as our parents planned. Not that I love him, but he would have had more sense."

But the Silver Lady, remembering certain beauties and brilliances of Her Royal Highness, the whole exquisite wonder of her, was silent.

After Jane had gone the Silver Lady tinkled a little bell, and when the maid came she sent for Her Royal Highness.

Her Royal Highness always obeyed at once the call of the Silver Lady. Her own mother had died when she was a baby, and in the quiet room, the old mahogany, the quaint brasses, the glowing grate, were helpful accessories to the love atmosphere of the Silver Lady.

"Dear Heart," said the Silver Lady, a little guiltily, because she had talked her over with Jane, "you haven't been to see me today."

Her Royal Highness kissed her. "No," she said, as she dropped down upon a little footstool, "I have quarreled with Harold, and I am in a mood."

"I am sure Harold doesn't quarrel," murmured the old lady mildly.

"No, *he* doesn't," said Her Royal Highness, "but *I* do. And sometimes I wish he would hit back."

The Silver Lady bent forward eagerly. "Do you?" she asked. "Do you?"

Her Royal Highness hesitated and dropped her eyes. "Oh, well, I'm not sure," she demurred; "only it wouldn't make me feel so—so rotten—" And she laughed a little.

When they had talked long of other things the Silver Lady spoke of the dinner. "It will be a great thing if Harold can make those men favor him," she said.

Her Royal Highness eyed her husband's ambassador suspiciously. "He's been telling you," she cried.

The Silver Lady blushed. "Oh, my dear," she protested.

"But he has," stormed Her Royal

Highness. "I shall tell him what I think of him—"

But when she had swept like a whirlwind out of the door, she swept back. "Of course it wasn't your fault," she said, and kissed the Silver Lady, drooping in her chair.

Jane tried next. She caught the Worm coming through the park.

"Come on and feed the geese in the pond," she said, and carried him off to a bench where for five minutes he watched her crumble crackers for the great gray birds who swam to her through the crystalline waters.

"I always feed the geese," she said, as she came back. "Most people feed the swans. But the geese appeal to me. They are not so vain."

"But the swans are beautiful," he said, smiling, and he took off his hat because the day was Spring-like, and she saw the threads of gray at his temples.

She blurted out, "Beauty isn't everything—now, there's Her Royal Highness."

Little sparks came into his eyes. "She is my wife," he reminded her.

"No, sit down," she insisted, as he rose. "I'm not going to say anything against her. But you must make that dinner a success, Harold. It means so much to your career—"

"I think perhaps we had better not talk of it," he said, still standing.

"If you would only assert yourself," she appealed.

"It is not necessary. She has her reasons."

"She has her moods," flashed Jane.

"I love her in all of them," he said quietly, and Jane was silent before the look on his face.

But then and there Jane formed the nucleus of a plot. When she had amplified it somewhat, she went to the Silver Lady.

"I am not sure whether I can do it," she said, "and you may have to tell a white lie or two to help me out."

The Silver Lady smiled into the fire. "You should not have told me," she said wisely; "then I should not have called them lies."

And to the Worm she said, "I think you should give the dinner. Jane will act as your hostess. Your wife can plead an indisposition, and Jane is your cousin."

"It will not be the same." He frowned a little. "I am going to give up the whole thing."

The Silver Lady straightened in her chair.

"Harold," she said, in her stern old voice, "I can have nothing to say when it comes to your wife, but against this foolishness I must enter my protest. What kind of a man is it who, seeing a future before him, lets it go because a woman weakens him?"

"Not that—" he faltered.

"Yes, that." She was trembling, but she went on inexorably, "Would you be a Hercules deprived of his strength, a Samson sleeping in the lap of a Delilah?" Then her voice broke. "Oh, Harold, Harold," she quavered, "be a *man*!"

He knelt down by her chair and hid his face in the folds of her gown, and she touched his hair with her old fingers lightly; and when at last he looked up he said, "You may tell Jane I shall be glad to have her."

That evening Her Royal Highness crept in and said, "How did it happen that he is going to have *Jane*?"

"Jane offered," said the Silver Lady. "She is his cousin, and if you could not be down, it would naturally fall to her."

"Of course I *could* be down," faltered Her Royal Highness, "but I didn't want to."

"Well, Jane is perfectly willing," said the Silver Lady quietly; "and besides, Jane likes that sort of thing."

Which was the first white lie.

"Well, of course, I don't *mind*," said Her Royal Highness, "only I don't like to have such things *expected* of me. Just a lot of men that I don't know."

"Of course," agreed the Silver Lady.

It was a very subdued Royal Highness that kissed the Silver Lady good night.

"I will come in and have a lovely evening with you," she planned, "and Jane and Harold can be as gay as they like."

"They have always been very congenial," said the Silver Lady, which was the second white lie.

After Her Royal Highness had gone the Silver Lady picked up the receiver at her elbow and called Jane.

"It is working," she reported gleefully; "spend as much on your gown as you like."

A week later, when Her Royal Highness sat on the footstool while the Silver Lady sipped the chicken broth that formed her evening meal, Jane came in, dressed for the sacrifice.

Her Royal Highness stared for a moment, and then she gasped, "*Jane!*"

The Silver Lady stared, too, for this was beyond her hopes.

And Jane, beautiful for the first time in her life, in a marvelous gown of perfect lines and shining weave, with her dark hair banded about her head in a new fashion, and with the Silver Lady's pearls setting off the whole; with young blood in her cheeks and the fire of success in her eyes, laughed triumphantly, and turned around and asked, "Do you like me?"

Her Royal Highness tried to smile, and said, "It is wonderful," and the Silver Lady repeated, "It is perfectly wonderful, Jane, how well you look."

"As a rule I don't care for this sort of thing," Jane informed them loftily. "I have my things made simply. But this was a question of Harold's career."

When Jane had gone Her Royal Highness looked long into the fire, and finally she said, "Jane is really pretty."

"She looked like a queen," the Silver Lady said.

Her Royal Highness, jealous of the title, said wistfully, "Did Harold ever think her pretty?"

"Of course, my dear," said the Silver Lady promptly, which was the third white lie.

And after another silence, during which the sound of Jane's gay voice came up to them, mingled with the laughter of the men, Her Royal Highness said, "I wonder if Harold would like to have me come down during the evening—?"

The Silver Lady's heart beat high

within her, but she said indifferently, "I think he might, my dear."

"Perhaps I *ought*," went on Her Royal Highness. "You see, I am his wife," and in the accent there was a defiance of Jane's claiming *that* title.

The wise Silver Lady gazed into the fire, and said nothing.

"I think I will go down," Her Royal Highness pursued. "I'll run and change my gown." And she stood still and looked at the Silver Lady.

The Silver Lady said never a word.

"I'll go," decided Her Royal Highness. But before she went she bent over the Silver Lady. "You love me, don't you?" she asked; and the Silver Lady put up her old arms and clasped her.

And when she was alone the Silver Lady gazed and gazed into the fire, seeing dead loves and past hopes, and seeing, too, as the old will, the things that are to be.

Her Royal Highness came back later, all in palest mauve, with her fair hair puffed and waved, and with her white shoulders bare, and she wore no jewels but the diamond heart that her husband had given her.

And just as she crossed the threshold, going out, the Worm crossed the threshold, coming in; and so they met!

"Dear heart," said the Worm, "I thought you were in bed."

"I was coming down," faltered Her Royal Highness. "I am your wife—they might expect it—you see, I am your wife."

Her lips quivered, and the Worm put both hands on her shoulders, and forgot the Silver Lady, and Jane, and the men who were at dinner.

"Oh, little lovely lady," he said, with all his heart in his voice, "you are my queen!"

And then they went downstairs together.



THE FLUTES OF THE FROGS

By Lloyd Roberts

'TIS not the notes of the homing birds through the first warm April rain,
Or the scarlet buds and the rising green come back to the land again,
That stir my heart from its Winter sleep to pulse the old refrain.

But when from the miles of bubbling marsh and the valley's steaming floor,
Shrilling keen with a million flutes the ancient Springtime lore,
I hear the myriad emerald frogs awake in the world once more.

All day when the clouds drive overhead and the shadows run below,
Crossing the wind-swept pasture-lots where the thin, red willows glow,
There's not a throat in the joyous host that does not swell and blow.

And all night long to the march of stars the wild, mad music thrills,
Voicing the birth of the glad, wet Spring in a thousand stops and trills,
Till the round sun gleams through the upland mists and climbs from the crooked hills.

THE TWIN CUPID

By Billee Glynn

PAUL MORTON, dramatic author, turned from the problem at which he had been staring in the half-written sheet, and getting on his feet went over to the open window. The room was his study—low of ceiling, uncarpeted, long tiers of books to the side—finished in an imitation of log-work and bare of decoration but for an odd picture of some literary or dramatic celebrity. The predominant tone was one of rustic homeliness, the quiet of byways; and the breeze softly stirring the curtains of the low-cut windows—laden with the scents of the garden and the freshness of the lake—lent a true pastoral flavor. Over the water the sails of a fishing-boat flashed and stirred, gulls every now and then struck gleams in the air; behind were the purple mists of the islands, and around the tumbling hills—with Beauchamp perched prettily on those nearest, the valley between. It was restingly beautiful, refreshing to anyone, but to Paul Morton more—it was home! And home still lit by the romance of a first love.

Three years ago it was. They had met one morning out there on a hillside, strangers to interpret for each other by a glance the supreme meaning of life. With the Summer had unfolded the dream. Then one Autumn day, brilliant with the glamour of dying things, he had claimed her, and they had chosen this residence among the hills with respect to all that had been and was. And with the city convenient, Beauchamp nodding friendly to them across the valley, the spot was indeed ideal. Here he had written the great drama of his life—a work of such

profound, poetic depth it had set the very critics by the ears. Now—the recent problem again presented itself, to disappear instantly, however, in a newer subject. Beside a rose-bush outside a figure had paused—slim, exquisite, clad in folds of delicate blue-gray. The face—as she turned it—was of a blithe, childish beauty—individual, rare, and with the woman brooding, deeply, too, somewhere behind the brow and smiling eyes. She placed the rose in the fluffed mass of gold hair piled high on her head, then spying the onlooker at the window shook a finger at him.

“Bad man!” she exclaimed, “to watch a woman at her toilet.”

“A woman!” he scoffed lightly. “A mere child—a witch!”

“A mere—witch!”

The chin tilted itself, the skirts were caught up with dignity, and she walked away with a sweeping glance of coyness.

“A fairy, a sylph,” he corrected, smiling. Then in another tone, “My wife!”

She paused, a tinge of blood deepening her cheeks. “What a tragedy to be old and a man,” she mocked. “But dinner will be ready in half-an-hour, man.”

He nodded in response and went back to the table and the problem of his play.

An hour later on a balcony overlooking the lake he had fallen into a brown study. Musing, too—for it was one of those silences between married people when old relations drift back to hallow the new—she glanced unconsciously in his direction—won, perhaps,

by the clear-cut masterliness of his profile accentuated rather than disguised by the growth of beard, the heavy, dark mustache and close-cropped silken whisker pointing at the chin. He turned at length and met her glance.

"You are more than lovely tonight, Millie."

"Ah, now I know you have something to tell me," she returned, waiving the compliment. "You always begin like that. Besides, you were conning something all through dinner. Out with it, sir!"

"Well, if I must. One of those letters today was from Mr. Bellart. He wants me in New York day after tomorrow to rehearse the play."

"Wednesday! And it is Thursday that Aunt Maria and Uncle Alex are to be down for their month's visit. Uncle Alex will be disappointed."

"It is too bad, certainly, but I am not likely to be gone more than two weeks, and then you will have Arthur."

"Arthur?"

Her face lit with a slight interest.

"Yes, the other letter was from him. He expects to be here by Tuesday next. He is billed with the Boston Stock Company this season, and said that he thought he would utilize his present opportunity of laziness to get acquainted with my wife, of whom he has heard so much. He was in Europe, you remember, when we were married, and has been very busy since. But now that he is coming I don't think he's likely to be disappointed."

She flushed delicately under his gaze. "Is he anything like you?" she asked.

"So much so that father could scarcely distinguish us, apart, till Arthur fell one day and scarred his chin. But even with that the rest of the world made such frequent mistakes that I took to these"—rubbing his beard. "We were twins, you know."

"Really, you never told me that before"—there was a slight jar in her voice—"I always fancied he was the younger."

"Younger in tone, perhaps; it's part of his life. And like most actors he's clean-shaven. But I'm not so old,

am I—not getting too old with my books and plays for you, Millie?"

His hand fell on hers, and though his words and smile were whimsical there was a real appeal in his eyes.

She rose and placed a hand over his mouth. "You are naughty tonight, boy," she said. "Come and race me to the beach."

And a few minutes later they were laughing along the winding path leading shoreward.

On Thursday the Bensons arrived, much to the delight of their hostess; for as a girl she had spent many a happy day on their Southern plantation and had grown to love the two kindly souls. But all that was before the colonel—as his negroes called him—had taken to rheumatism in his one leg and a yearly stampede through the watering-places—dragging his patient little wife, with her grave, sweet ways, after him. A very spirited, rather autocratic old chap was the colonel, with his bald head, Uncle Sam whisker, and hearty laugh. Landing from the covered 'bus that had driven him over from Beauchamp, the first thing he did was to blow a great breath at the beauty of things—the white house with its Greek columns set like a statue in the great, cool gardens, the blue lake hemmed in by mist-hung hills, the valley flaunting its silver thread of ribbon. Then, seeing his wife in the act of being kissed, he was quite sure that like treatment would eradicate the acid from his joints, that marriage could never take from the looks of some women, and that true love was the greatest thing on earth—except an uncle, of course!

"But your husband, Millie?" he concluded suddenly.

"In New York." And she explained the circumstances to him.

"Oh! Well, never mind; I can run the concern till he comes back, I guess."

And in truth he was quite capable of it; for the old gentleman had been a hustler in his day and still carried a part of his abnormal energies. In one short hour, inspired by a hearty lunch-

eon, he had accomplished much—given a humorous recital of his last year's travels that fairly gurgled things, made love to the maid under the very eyes of his wife, won the hired boy to his genial tyranny by the gift of a silver dollar and undue praise of the pony Jekko, made a tour of the grounds—praising, criticizing, swung himself almost to sleep in the big hammock under the chestnut-tree; and ended finally in the library to find a long shelf of humor, plunged himself into a chair and, it might be said, remained there ever afterward.

There he was when Arthur Morton came, a day ahead of his time. And so it was that the bell rang long without an answer; for Aunt Maria was lying down, and her niece had gone out in the gardens. But after a bit, catching a glint of white amid the foliage, the visitor stepped around the house, let himself through a wicket-gate, and approached so softly that the woman bending over a broken shrub did not see him. When she did turn it was with the rose flame leaping to her cheeks, a swift light in her eyes, for the voice seemed thrillingly familiar.

"So you are Paul's wife," he had said, smiling down on her in a debonnaire way.

And she did not answer immediately, but stood staring at him, a startled look having chased the smile out of her face. How could two be so much alike? The form was Paul's, the eyes, the brow—the whole face, in fact, as she could have fancied it without a beard—Paul and yet not Paul! Slowly the slight discrepancies presented themselves; the greater carelessness in dress, the hair close cut, not so curly and with no gray patch at the brow, the scar on the chin, the quicker impetuosity of the eyes, the mouth, together, perhaps, with a more vivid boyishness. His voice, too, rang back on her with its note of difference—its careful modulation and unconscious stress as of one accustomed to declaim.

"Yes, I am Paul's wife—and you—?"

"Arthur. I believe I startled you."

He was laughing at her now, and she suddenly remembered her duties of hostess and extended her hand.

"You look so much like Paul," she said with resumed calmness. But the blood again leaped to her cheeks, a strange sense of familiarity stirred within her in the warmth of his hand-clasp. And she broke away abruptly in a pretty flurry of welcome.

"But you must be tired and famished," she concluded at length; "I will go and have dinner prepared right away."

And despite his protest she took him to the house and left him in the library with her uncle, saying that the table would be ready in a few minutes. But outside the library door the smile died instantly from her face to be succeeded by a pained, clouded look, and she walked slowly down the hall, pausing, her hands pressed in front of her, at the oil painting of her husband. For a long moment she looked at it, the blood coming and going in her cheeks; then suddenly she leaned forward with a little moan.

"Oh, Paul," she sobbed, "why do you look so much alike? And why—oh, why—is there that something down deep in him that is you—you, Paul?"

It was the instinctive trembling of the doe at the first cry of the hounds, and she came to herself with resilient pride.

"You are very weak and very foolish," she asseverated, drawing herself up erectly before the mirror on the opposite wall, "and your husband would be ashamed of you. It's because you're lonesome, I guess—lonesome for Paul, but you must remember you're Paul's wife, and what he would expect of you."

The smile had come back to her face, the flush to her cheeks like the first token of a May dawn, and turning to glance once more at the picture she went down to the kitchen humming the fragment of an old song.

That meal should have been a memorable one to a stranger, and a brother-in-law—well, there were many reasons;

and the many reasons, like the grapes clustering in mid-table, went together to make a whole especially inviting and refreshing. The room itself—a perfect piece of floriated workmanship—for one thing was cool and softly hushed in shadow; the breeze lapping the swaying curtains carried the flavor of outside things—scented gardens, orchards, the lure of the lake; the courses were cooling, succulent, fragrant; the girl serving a picture of rustic health and prettiness; while Aunt Maria, smiling with her grave gentleness on all, presented but the very same picture years after; and Uncle Alex, sipping his sherbet delightedly, had become mellowed in the sweet, restful peace of the place. Then the very best reason of all—her delicately rounded arms bare to the snowy lace flounces at the elbow, the breast flowing away in inimitable lines, the face with its exquisite tinting, its free, joyous youth and blithe loveliness—was the hostess herself, the presiding genius of the feast. What a vision she made, indeed! And with the gay lilt of her conversation sparkling through all like a stream in sylvan places what a power of impressment! So if the colonel swore softly that she wasn't a human being at all, but an embodied spirit, what wonder was it? And if a visitor's eyes, sitting opposite her, should have something in them at times that should not have been in those of a brother-in-law, what wonder was that, either—and what difference did it really make, since she was doing it all for Paul's sake?

But afterward, down there at the bridge in the valley whither she had strolled with him on his way back to his hotel—down there with the insecurity, the necromancy of the dusk about them, the loneliness of resting things and weird callings—what had come over her? Her mood of the dining-room had carried her all the afternoon—while she showed him the house, the grounds, made a third hand at pedro with him and her uncle, and afterward listened to them discuss with panegyric the great people of the stage dead and gone; and through all

the cunning of her love had found difference after difference between this twin brother and her husband. But down here, alone with him, when he took her hand to thank her and bid her good night, why was this all swept away? Why did the tumult of their first meeting rush back on her, the chill of a great fear sweep from her cheeks the blood that had flamed into them on meeting his eyes—filled with a free, frank admiration, and deeper with that indefinable something that made them another's? Out of the dark a nameless apprehension, a great natural prodigy presented itself. She shrank back, drawing herself free as if smothering. Then speech eased her.

"Please go," she said; "you look so much like Paul—I am afraid—I might forget." And immediately after, with a quick regret for the words, "But of course there is not much danger," ending with a strained little laugh.

"Not much danger—for you!" he rejoined, still smiling. Then, lifting his hat, he took his way across the bridge. She waited with a quickly beating heart till the footsteps died away and a whistled air broke the stillness from the other side; then she ran hastily back the incline, the whistle pursuing her all the way. When she reached her room it was to throw herself on the bed and cry like a child. She roused herself immediately, however, to turn to the enlarged photograph of her husband on the wall. But the face brought no relief this time. The man on his way to Beauchamp had simply grown a beard; the eyes that looked down on her were his. She rose in quick revolt, walking up and down the room and pausing at length in front of the picture.

"No, no," she argued, "you may be twins in birth, but there is no such thing as twin souls. I will not believe it. You are Paul, Paul, and he is only your brother."

But it was not till she found the letter from her husband on the dresser that relief came to her and the picture assumed its real identity. She read it many times, fondling it in her hands.

"I saw Arthur in New York today," it ran, "and do not think he looks well. You will be very kind to him, Millie, for my sake, and give him all of your time possible. Do not be startled if he looks very much like me."

Ah, that was it—she had been startled, simply startled for the moment. But she wouldn't be again.

And for more than a week she kept true to her determination, showing the stranger—who was at the house constantly—a dutiful respect, but withal a little cold and closed within herself, and never revealing to him the radiant personality that had so enthused that first afternoon.

But one evening—when the wing of a great rainstorm had swung to them over the lake and dripped noisily about, when they were ensconced in the pretty back parlor with Aunt Maria dozing in a great chair, and the vivacious mood with which the man had been wont of late to storm her friendly reserve sunk to a sudden melancholy—she did relent toward him with a spontaneity dangerous in its abruptness. Perhaps it was the letter from Paul she had received but the hour before, saying he would be home in a day or two, that gave her the assurance; perhaps uppermost in her heart was the feeling that she had been unkind, the revolt of her sensitive womanhood at any necessity for protection. At any rate, when he broke the silence which had fallen between them by remarking that he thought of returning to the city at an early date to do some extra studying before beginning his season's work, it was with a quick warmth, a sudden loosing of herself, the old charm, that she interposed.

"But you mustn't do that," she said, "after seeing you in New York, Paul wrote me that you looked far from well; and that he wished to have you with us at long as possible. It would be much better for you to stay here than do any extra work just now. Or am I such a poor hostess that you are growing tired of me? Paul will be home in a few days now, but I would not want you to be disappointed in his wife."

"Disappointed!" He smiled in the

petaline face tilted toward him, a light in his eyes from the delicate suggestion in her last words. "I might as well try to be disappointed with the Venus of Milo."

"You mean, of course, I am just stone," she rejoined, braving his glance.

"Yes, precious stone to make the possessor rich and impoverish all others." The slight tone of the sardonic in his laugh was perhaps unconscious, but catching a reflection of it in her face he made haste to add: "Except myself, —I too am rich in a sister-in-law."

"Ah, thank you. I am going to sing to you for that and to persuade you to stay too, if you will." And she went to the piano.

It had quit raining outside, and the air, washed clean with the fresh breath of the wet still in it, was peculiarly resonant. Her low-tuned voice beating in it was like a tremolo of golden bells, and beneath the under throb of a great, latent passion giving significance. Love-songs they were—old classics of the heart—the ones that her husband loved; and she really sang them to him—a rich, passionate assertion of herself springing free from a recent doubt. But passion, over-assurance and temptation! If with the wild sweep of the music on her soul, the man beside her a living image of her husband, and the deep glow—the unspoken, eternal promise of youth in his eyes that made a certain May morning on a hillside three years before so memorable to her—if with this, their loneliness—for Aunt Maria had left the room, the abetting charm of the night, the call of nature about—if with all this, in the rapture of Ben Jonson's "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," she should really drink to those eyes smiling down on her, was it fault of hers? Or was it fault of hers either that she should receive their pledge in return?

It was that night she promised to run up to the city with him next day to see the trial performance of a new play put on by a great American actress.

It was rather an early opening of the season, and the first gallery where they

sat furnished a comparative seclusion. About a hundred others were seated too, but these had mostly chosen a closer proximity to the stage and were scattered along the outer ranges of the semicircle toward the wings. Only a corpulent Dutch gentleman and his wife, a smooth-faced man who might have been a playwright himself frowning intellectually through a lorgnette, and one or two other couples were seated near, and these rather to the front. The auditorium, however, was crowded, stifling with heat and rapture—for the play was a great success—and fanning itself with an audible buzz, during intervals of the orchestra, in wait for the curtain to rise on the last act.

It had gone down on the soul crisis of a beautiful woman—a woman young, passionate, in the tragedy of two loves, each equally potent, her affianced and his brother, the one a genius—paradoxical, brilliant, egotistical—disregarding the claims of kinship for the first individual rights of his own soul, the other calmer, nobler in the orthodox way, blinding his eyes to all else but his faith in the woman. There they were, different as nature could make them, each equally attractive to the woman, each loving her in his own way, so that when the younger, the egotist, had declared his love as the climax to their flirtation, when she had run away without answering him, in the solitary tempest of her soul had burst from her the great cry:

"Oh, whither! can the soul then dual be?—
To bear at once two equal, noble loves,
Fair yet abortions in their opposition,
To fatalize themselves, the womb they sprang
As too great birth the mother often kills.
Have I two hearts, one on the left, one right?
Then which the one?—is the left right, the
right,

Or both, and being so a greater wrong—
Direction none leaving to guide the soul?
Two answers to life's question, single, but
Of equal stress, each from a hope as dear
From abnormalities of opposed likes
That buy a blessing with a curse as great.
Then which? But why the 'which,' why not
the both?

Since gaining what you hold with loss is but
Doubling the loss? And yet the question is
As steadfast as this dire tragedy.
So which again?—Oh, ghoulish, bartering
which!"

And through it all the vivid portrayal of the leading actress, the poetic fire of her wayward wooer, had spell-bound the audience, throwing somewhat in shadow the calmer character of the elder brother; and the man and woman in the centre gallery had listened with a strange, unwonted interest. Then when the curtain fell on the second act the thrill of the thing had snapped in precipitate fear, and a sense of faintness, of drifting on currents too strong for her had taken hold of her, followed by impotent rebellion. Why was it this play, this problem, she asked herself, and had her companion known? Yet she dared not turn to look in his face. She had seen it throughout the act, and the same impetuous spirit, the same ecstasy glowed in it as breathed through the words of the mad, eloquent strutter on the stage. And his eyes—Paul's eyes—she could not meet them. But how she longed for the street, the cool, placid night, the open sky with its easing, immeasurable vistas of calm stars—aye, the valley of Beauchamp, the house on the hill, the little white-draped room with its sense of purity and the picture on the wall; away from the gay, warm music belching up to smother her, the sweltering crowd beneath, these mad mummers of human passion—away from it all to the security of actual, fixed things. Then after long moments during which she sat staring straight ahead—a face so tense and beautiful that in a less secluded position it might have divided the attention of the house—her companion spoke, touched her arm, and she was obliged to turn.

"No, I cannot say I like plays of this kind best," she answered, taking the fan he proffered. "I like something truer, more in accord with actual life." Then, turning the full sweep of her eyes upon him, "Nothing like this, you know, could ever occur in real life."

But the emphasis was uncalled for. "Certainly not," he replied; "still, it makes a most interesting subject for a dramatist."

He was very grave and gentle, so dif-

ferent than he had been during the performance, that she wondered. And it was with a feeling of relief that she found him so, a sense of her own foolishness that in reaction made her charming; and they chatted cordially till the curtain rose. Then in response to her unguarded mood came the old thrill, the single cry of passion, the magic of poetry that shall ever be greater than fact, the vivid pleadings of the younger lover revealing in lightning-like flashes the dark sublimity of his daring soul, and the ringing, tragic outburst of the woman flinging herself in his arms:

"I give myself to you, not that I love
You more than he, but that you have more
power

To plead and so to hate if I should lean
As my bond draws me to the other side;
And so in spite of bond, honor and love—
For he must ever be half of my heart—
I throw myself on your madness divine
Because my soul would shrivel in your hate."

The curtain fell, a thunder of acclaim went up, startling her from the spell that held her, and she turned suddenly and looked in her companion's face. He was holding her hand, his eyes burning. In some dim, occult way she was aware that he had taken it many minutes before, that she had returned, enjoyed the pressure, that he had kissed it. Then suddenly he bent and kissed it again. The blood blazed into her cheeks; she tore it away from him. The lights flashed on to find her standing apart, haughty and erect. He met her glance for one moment with an impetuous appeal, then turned away to notice the couple who were looking back at them curiously.

"We had better be going," he said in a strange, drawn tone of courtesy. And she followed him without a word.

Nor did she speak during the ride on the car to Beauchamp, but stared out of the window, her face in her hand, or with unseeing eyes at the programme in her lap. A pained tenseness—almost a hurt apathy—seemed to possess her; a deep, silent storm beating her at times to the verge of insensibility and apparent only in the spots of red burning in her cheeks, the occasional

trembling of her hand. Once or twice only did he address her, but she made no reply and he fell into silence, too, regarding her with a look of self-reproach. Only when they were nearing Beauchamp—when their last fellow-passenger had dropped off on the outskirts of the town—did he again make any move toward her.

"Millie," he said, bending forward, a great pity and tenderness in his eyes. But she did not seem to hear. "Millie," he repeated, placing his hand on her shoulder. A shiver went through her and she shook it off with spasmodic fury.

"Don't dare to call me that—I'm Paul's wife—remember, Paul's wife!"

Then, turning from him, she let her head fall forward on her arms in sudden weakness.

And strangely enough he smiled—a smile of triumphant pride—made another half-movement in her direction, but restraining himself turned with closed lips to the night and the glimmering lights of the town sweeping by the car window.

In accordance with previous orders they found the boy and the pony awaiting them at his hotel to drive her across the valley.

"I will not ask to accompany you," he said, when she had taken her seat.

But she remained silent, tucking the duster around her in an abstracted way. Then, taking advantage of the boy's absence, he stepped in the space of the diminutive wheels and bent close—bright-eyed, pleading.

"I think you might forget this little thing," he said boyishly. "It wasn't really my fault, you know, but the play, the realism of it. You should remember, too, that it has been the whole habit of my life to live rôles, and how easy it was to forget. Besides"—and a sudden hoarseness came into his voice—"it doesn't really matter to you—you are Paul's wife!"

"No, it doesn't really matter to me," she repeated, turning her blanched face toward him, that flinched even as she spoke; "it doesn't matter to me at all—I am Paul's wife!" She smiled brave-

ly, combatively, a weak white flash that went out like a wind-blown candle. Then, the boy appearing at that instant, the lost whip in his hand, they were off the next moment rattling down the hill, the man's last pleading, "Then you will forget?"—unanswered.

He stood listening till the sound of the hoofs died in the valley.

"My God," he ejaculated, "what a woman!" And the same smile of pride was on his face that had been upon it when he was in the car. Then he sighed deeply. "And what a traitor!" he added.

And out in the dark the tension which had held the woman suddenly snapped, and she sank down in her seat with a forlorn little sigh. Shadowy tentacles of things seemed clutching at her from out the night—dim, vague, horrible things that marred her soul, yet held for her a secret thrill. At the house she aroused herself and stepped numbly from the rig; then paused at the door, drawing herself together for the meeting with Aunt Maria. Entering the sitting-room, however, it was with a sense of relief that she found the elder woman had gone to bed; and she took her way down the hall and up the broad stairs, a hurt, drooping little figure—the eyes and fever spots of the cheeks strangely brilliant and at variance with the pallor of the rest of the face, the impotent bearing. She almost stumbled once, then tiptoed her way noiselessly, making the effect ghostly. The echoes she had aroused spoke to her in familiar voices grown painfully strange. Inside the room she locked the door, and letting the coat she carried fall unheeded to the floor, stood looking about her. Everything was the same and yet what a poignant sense of loss there was! The sweet purity, the peace of it, brought a sudden sob to her throat and she sank weakly on the foot of the bed. Then slowly her eyes fastened on the picture of her husband. A flood of color came to her cheeks. She rose hastily and turned the picture to the wall.

"Paul! oh, Paul," she cried, "I cannot look you in the face."

Then tears came to her, and she threw herself down on the coverlet, her face in her hands.

It was that night that she wrote the telegram to her husband urging him home, then tore it up to spend an hour re-writing it—to give it up finally for a letter; that she gathered together from their different holies, musing over them with jealous eagerness, the faded, delicately scented love-letters, the terse, meaningful notes of their courtship, the little tokens that had passed between them, the flower now withered and pressed—yet how sacredly sweet!—that he had given her that morning when they had met on the hillside. Then in the first hours of the morning she sat—her hands clasped in front of her—living it all over—the three years with him. Every little thrill she recalled, every little incident of meaning, with a wonderful gift of memory that was her best evidence. And in that dreariest hour before daylight the dawn again lit in her face. When it looked in at the window she was lying on the bed, still dressed. But her breathing was calm and regular. It had all come back to her, and the picture once more hung face outward on the wall. It was the colonel's lusty voice that roused her, calling to the spaniel.

"Heigh-o, Pete—Doherty! Come for your breakfast here, you dog. Heigh-o, heigh-o, I say!"

Her aunt was humming tunelessly on the veranda. She arose with alacrity and made her toilet. Then picking up the letter she had left on the table she tore it into fragments.

"I do not need to send it now," she said to herself, smiling.

Downstairs everything was moving, cheerful—from the colonel, the yelping dog, and the happy-faced servant-girl to the sun smiling from the opposite ridge. She stood weighing the impression.

"How foolish I was!" she said under her breath. "His explanation as an actor was most reasonable, after all. And yet—"

She had a strange, pained sense of security that a bar had been placed on the man's visits—for she felt this was so—that her husband had promised to be home that week.

He did not come, however. On Saturday she received a letter saying that on account of certain delays it was impossible for him to get away till the middle of the next week.

But you can depend on me for sure then, Millie [the letter ran]. And in the meantime I hope you and Arthur are making the old place merry; from what you have told me of Uncle Alex and Aunt Maria I know they will hold their end all right. But Arthur is such a strange fellow in some ways—I have begun to think—that you may not take to him readily. I have had several rather humorous encounters with people here who took me for him—the last few years when we have seen so little of each other have made us more alike than ever, it appears—and the result was the eliciting of some rather astonishing facts concerning him. For one thing, he is the head of a bachelor society and an inveterate misogynist, though a model of courtesy to the sex outwardly, I believe. This—together with the brilliant career to which his last year's work points—has made him, it seems, the mark of many of the women of his class; and it is well known that one of them, the loveliest and most eccentric of all, made a downright proposal to him, which he as downrightly refused. The thing was comedy exteriorly, of course, but it is rumored that her intentions were really serious. I am telling you all this that you may not find any eccentricity on his part burdensome, and I want him to like you. But you are always your own kind, sweet self, Millie, and there is little doubt of that.

This part of the letter she read over and over. It was at once confirmation, assurance and liberty, and of these perhaps liberty was the sweetest. For the last few days in which she had seen nothing of Arthur Morton had not been lived without a sense of battle, a note of irksomeness in the separation. Disregarding it she had not asked herself the reason. Had there been a slight fear in the invasion? Surely not, since the very rupture itself was sufficient explanation. Yet now with the authorization of her husband's letter the necessity for conciliation came to her eagerly in a dozen arguments—the foolishness of her anger, her husband's return, the elucidation of character

his letter afforded. Then in the midst of this a sudden draft chilled her. In the mind's avidity memory had recalled for an instant the moment at the theatre when Arthur Morton had kissed her hand—the thrill of it! But she crushed out the weakness of the suggestion with scorn. That was all past—a part of her sensitiveness, the imaginativeness of the play, and the passion second-hand it had wrought in both of them. Her morbidness from their first meeting, when his striking resemblance to her husband had so startled her, was also of the past. In contrast her mind dwelt with a growing sense of power on the days following when with friendliness she had held him at such a distance.

It was the next day, Sunday, that she went to church at Beauchamp, then drove over later in the afternoon. She returned a little flushed. She had seen nothing of him. Perhaps he had gone away, and what explanation could she give Paul?

The following evening she sent the boy with a message to his hotel, and having done so took the road to the beach in a rather troubled state of mind.

Half-way, however, she heard a quick footstep, and turning found him behind her laughing and half-running.

"My," he exclaimed, "you're a fast walker! If it had not been for the boy's message I could have fancied you were running away from me. I thank you much for sending word, but I was on the bridge coming."

He was so eager, so boyish. Her mind dwelt for an instant on Paul, so like him that morning on the hillside when they had first met.

"Why should you thank me?" she asked in a matter-of-fact way. "I know of no reason why you should not come."

"None, except—forgetting life and its manners in the power of art."

"You explained that, and Paul tells me you're eccentric."

"That's good of him; I guess I am. And to begin with let us pick these berries."

He clambered laughing up the steep

about which the path had wound, and came down a moment later, the berries in his hand.

"Half," he said, holding them out to her. Then suddenly, "But I bar this big one."

She looked up; his eyes were dancing. His mood caught hers.

"Not a bit of it," she said; "I'm a girl."

"Oh, well, take it then," he acceded with resignation, feeding her. Then his laugh rang out joyously again. And she—the throb of her youth quickened to meet him. The fragrance, the freshness of that far—yet ever sweet—May morning when love had first touched the bloom of her girlhood to a deeper tinge broke back on her with all its delicious significance, and her ecstasy cared not for identity.

It made her truly a girl again—blithe, care-free, and most of all lovely. And she in turn made him a more impetuous boy.

A half-hour is short to the babblement of children; graced by the throb of more vivid meanings it is still shorter; but in that time they had again awakened to a realization of themselves.

He had built a house of pebbles on the beach, and sank back on a boulder to gaze at it with enthusiasm.

"My house," he said, "but no one to go into. Who was it said, 'a poor house without love'?"

The tone of his voice had changed suddenly, so that she looked up with a quick nervousness in her face. And as he rose to his feet her glance still met his with its reckless, glowing purpose, the blood slowly pouring itself into her face. "For love is all—food, shelter, drink, e'en life," she heard him go on; and yet it was another scene that had set itself in her brain—that of another man with the same eyes, the voice to thrill her, telling her the story of his love in almost this same place. She put out her hands as if to protect herself, and he crushed them in his own.

"Millie, I love you. I love you," he said; "I must tell you."

And even as he spoke she flung herself with a little moan in his arms.

But it was only for a moment. The next, his kisses still warm on her lips, she had torn herself free and paused, white-faced, a few paces distant, looking back at him.

"Oh, oh!" she sobbed, and with a low, agonized cry fled up the path alone.

"Blanche, what time did Aunt Maria and Uncle Alex say they would be back when they were leaving this morning?"

She had paused, a drooping figure, one foot on the stairs, looking over her shoulder at the maid.

"Said they might stay overnight, ma'am, but not to call you as it had been arranged. Going to the Chesleys', weren't they? That is the first place I worked."

"Indeed, Blanche! So it is not likely they will be back till morning, then?"

"Well, I couldn't say for that. Uncle Alex—excuse me, Mr. Benson—said they mightn't, that's all. Is your headache worse, ma'am? It's too bad Mrs. Benson went away."

"Oh, not at all, Blanche; I was just inquiring, that's all. My head has improved somewhat, thank you."

She went up the stairs slowly, the maid looking after her, and turned into the boudoir adjoining her own room. The letter still lay on the table where she had thrown it in her moment of repulsion following the passion of the first reading; and at the sight of it now the mask she had worn downstairs dropped from her, the great struggle of the night and day evidencing itself plainly in her face—the wide eyes, half wild in their shadows, the pinched skin, the lips' quivering sensibility. Then, the blood slowly surging to her cheeks, she picked it up and read it over again.

MILLIE:

As I am leaving tonight and we are never likely to meet again, I am taking this parting liberty of addressing you. I know all you must have suffered since last night—all that perhaps you regret—for I know all I have suffered myself; yet except the one circumstance—that you are Paul's wife—I regret

nothing. For no love great as mine can regret or even subdue itself. It is because of this—that my heart must assert its individual claim if I stayed—because of the brotherly affection which has always existed between Paul and myself—that I go. And you, Millie—you love Paul, I know; but can it be possible that if I had met you first you would have loved me—that what passed between us last night was not without meaning to you—not simply the result of my likeness to your husband and the impulse of the moment? Can there be truth after all in the play we saw together? Or deeper still in such case would the problem lie in the fact that Paul and I are twins—that besides outward resemblance there is something essentially alike in either of us to appeal to you? If so, what a strange riddle! And whose fault?—not yours or mine! This is only a thought, of course, founded on a supposition that you would probably now reject with scorn, yet in the early hours of this morning it was actually a hope. So much would the knowledge of your love signify to me, Millie! But remembering the terrible meaning such a solution might possess for you I crushed it out—crushed it as I would anything that endangered your happiness. And now in conclusion I hope that with Paul's return this little incident will pass completely from your life, and that no shadow will ever again mar its happiness. As for me, one short hour down there on the beach tonight as the sun dies out—to remember things—and I shall be gone. But, believe me, to the tragedy of loneliness that reaches before—aye, to its very close—I shall carry with its pang of ecstasy the memory of that one moment—that moment of ineffable sweetness—when I held you in my arms and you were mine.

Yours in farewell,

ARTHUR MORTON.

She sat staring at the last page long. The tone of resignation touched her strangely. But by-and-bye a flood of sunlight entered the room, and she rose to her feet, going over to the window. The sun had just touched the horizon and would soon be "dying out." She stood waiting as one who listens for the sound of a death gong, hot flashes of things passing over her face. Then as the shadows slowly lengthened in the room a sudden vehemence possessed her.

"I must be fair—I must be fair to him," she repeated, turning unconsciously to the picture on the wall.

And a minute later, a light wrap about her shoulders, she had passed quickly down the stairs.

He was standing down there in the shadow of the rock when she came to him, and they saw each other with a little shock—pleasure on his part, recoil on hers. For now that she had come to him she had an impulse to turn and flee. But he approached eagerly holding out his arms and she controlled herself with a visible effort.

"No, no, not that," she said; "you must not even touch me; I am Paul's wife, and I love him. I came because I knew I could trust you—because I thought I should be fair." Her voice quivered and she paused as if choosing her words, the color coming and going in her face; then looked straight in his eyes with a steady courage. "You said in your letter that the knowledge of my love would mean a great deal to you. It is for that I came—to tell you it is true—that I do love you—that you may have the knowledge of it to comfort you in your loneliness." The tone had raised itself slightly, sinking again to an under note that was a half-sob—but her bearing, her eyes, were still tense, still steady as she went on, so that the purity of her flame thrilled him as something more sacred than heaven itself. "I belong to Paul, and I love him no less than I do you; but I feel that I owe you this because if I had met you first I might have belonged to you. Why I should love two men equally well I do not know. The play, it seems, has come home to me. But I prefer to admit the truth to myself and both of you—even with all it means—rather than live a lie by denying it. I am going back to write to Paul now."

She backed away from him a few paces, swayed slightly, and the blood leaving her face, put up her hands to her eyes. He awoke from the spell in which she had held him just in time to catch her in his arms. But she did not faint—his pressure revived her.

"No, no, you mustn't," she insisted weakly, battling him—"you mustn't even touch me. I am your brother's wife and I trusted you."

"Trusted me!—yes, Millie, and I am the worst of traitors. I am Paul, your

own husband, your very own boy who loves you better than all else in the world for all his treachery. I have no twin brother and Arthur does not look like me. I have simply been playing a part, fooling you all along to find out for the sake of my drama if such a thing could be. Oh, Millie, will you not believe me—forgive me?"

It was almost a cry and he bent over her with quick passion, hurt by the strange look in her eyes—for still in his grasp she had drawn herself suddenly erect, staring at him.

But she kept him back almost sternly. "I cannot believe that Paul would do such a thing," she said. "It was too cruel. You will have to prove it to me—you might be fooling me now."

"Oh, Millie!" Then, in a quick torrent of words, he poured out the story. How he had begun the deceit thoughtlessly at first in the interest of his art, not meaning to carry it so far; but how, despite the pain it caused her—though he had been on the point of telling her several times—and his own torture as its perpetrator, he had

been lured on by the sweetness of winning her over again in spite of herself; how he had bribed the boy to get her letters and had forwarded his own, sealed, to New York to be posted there. Every little detail, every little disguise he went into, even showing her a picture of his brother, and dwelling particularly on that night in the car on the way to Beauchamp when he would have told her but she would not let him.

But the doubt still in her eyes, she sat staring at him not knowing whether to believe.

"My God, Millie, don't look at me like that. Tell me that you believe me—that I haven't lost your love over it."

She leaned suddenly toward him, touching his arm.

"Show me that," she said; "I saw you get it—then I will know."

For answer he tore up his sleeve, revealing on his arm just above the elbow a long red scar.

She turned from it, a rush of tears in her eyes, and threw herself on his breast with a low cry.



THE INNS

By Theodosia Garrison

LANDLORD LIFE, thy inn is bright
With hearth-flame and with candle-light;
With noise of feasting and of jest,
With coming and departing guest
The day long, and the night.

Landlord Life, I too have share
Of board and hearth, of bed and chair
For yet a little time, no more.
When new guests clamor at the door,
'Tis forth the old must fare.

Landlord Life, thy score for me
So shall I pay it cheerfully,
Ere to that other Inn I creep
Within whose cool guest-chambers sleep
A dreamless company.

THEIR OWN KIND

By Kate Masterson

DUNGANE had met the two pretty Miss Veritys in England the preceding Spring. They were graceful, slender, flower-like girls, and they set into the mellow, meadowy picture serving tea on the lawn in Surrey or punting on the river while he lolled in flannels and adored them, first for their exquisite noses and square, fine chins, their soft voices and tender eyes; later for themselves.

He was an American artist taking a holiday, earned through a season's terrific work on a magazine that had expired gracefully through an excess of wide margins, ragged edges and Dungan's own symbolic illustrations, all absolutely unappreciated by the advertisers and the general public.

The Veritys petted him through an imaginary nervous breakdown, filled him with strawberries, buttered scones and Ceylon, and, man-like, he loved them without being quite sure which was the one. Whichever spoiled him, the most outrageously held his heart for the time, and they called him Dunnie.

In return he told them tales of studio life in New York, which he grew by degrees to color rather vividly as he saw Nora's gray eyes deepen to the color of the sea on a dark morning. Both girls drew things themselves, sketched outdoors and had the art microbe well developed under their red-brown thatches, aureoled about lovely virginal faces.

The Veritys represented an absolutely girlish type—the clinging, frilly, womanly sort that Dungan had never come across in America, and he forever after used their faces for his

angels, which were his specialty. His enemies used to say that if he ever came to earth he'd be a great artist.

About New York's delightful bohemias he lied cheerfully with a purely artistic unconsciousness. Stretched on a rug under an elm-tree with a thrush thrilling passionately now and then above them and the girls' eyes caressing him, it all seemed as though it might be true. At least it should have been, and it was an easy matter to make all the geese, swans, and to picture the artist life in the States as something more wonderful than Du Maurier or Murger ever dreamed.

When he sailed they had his promise to return the next Summer, for he never even hinted that artists at home need hesitate to plan a three months' vacation abroad. The memory of the girls was a very sweet one, for they kissed him good-bye and cried, and it all lasted long after the English roses had faded in his cabin and he had seen them whirled through the port-hole in a beautiful cloud of pink and white and yellow that faded into the spray and wrung his heart somehow as though they had been alive.

He never fancied what would really happen; that Europe was not to see him again for a score of years—lean years during which he had to change his angels into theatre posters—and that Madge and Nora Verity, absolutely unheralded, should confront him in the murky light of the landing outside his New York door after he had let the knocker rattle unheeded several times as he worked on, anxious to use every minute of the fading day.

They greeted him with that enviable

vitality that persons always have on arriving after a sea voyage; with ripples of laughter and long-forgotten "What O's!" for two years had passed since the Surrey Summer. Their soft English voices were like a half-remembered melody as they explained their unconventional visit. Dungane had moved from the address they had known through his occasional holiday cards and the correspondence had waned, so they hardly had hoped to find him. But here, looking for a vacant studio in this very building, they had seen his name on the door. And it was only their third day in New York!

Dungane was rather embarrassed by their presence, for his place was bare and, to tell the truth, dirty. No cheery tea-kettle bubbled to greet them, no logs flamed on the hearth. But the Veritys soon laughed him out of his mood and said he must dine with them at their hotel, an old French place on a downtown street, where they had gone because some ship friends, who had sailed with them from Havre, were to stop there.

The girls said it was delightful, quite like Paris, and they would not listen to any refusal. So he gave them some sketches to look at and made a quick change in the one other room that was his. Then he walked them down Fifth avenue in the purple twilight of the early Spring and showed them the Cathedral and the clubs and the great hotels, noticing the eyes of the passers-by rest admiringly on the two fresh English faces beneath their oddly tied-down hats, under gray-blue motor veils.

Now, if Dungane had even had an inkling that at the Hotel Royale that night the Pen and Palette Club was holding an annual function that was called a "splash," he would sooner have ventured into a lion's den than there. Long before the two girls had slipped into pretty, Dutch-necked frocks and had come to meet him at the corner table opening on an iron balcony, he had become aware that the place was fast filling up with many of his erstwhile friends and enemies, knights of the brush and pen.

Once he, too, had been a Pen and Paletter and had reveled with them in the mad, glad days that he now thought of as his youth, though that time was only three years ago, before the ragged-edged magazine had come into his life and made him feel that art was serious and that it was his duty to uplift his soul with other foods than spaghetti and garlic-touched salads.

He had grown more serious, but not happier, and some called him a prig; but they all loved him in spite of that, these merry club fellows, and, surprised and glad to see him, they seized his hands and slapped him on the back, reproaching him for the long absence which he had never meant to break. Above all they smiled upon the Veritys when those two maidens came radiantly to greet Dungane. Pen and Paletters joyed in beauty, and they were mystified as to his lovely friends, who seemed fairly delighted to learn that they had stumbled accidentally into that happy-land of art of which Dungane himself had told them.

He was fairly caught, and with the two girls, despite his denials, was forced to join the big club dinner in another room hung with posters and musical with mandolins. Through the feast there were speeches and songs, at times interrupted with jolly bursts of studio slang and criticism. There were a few stories told that caused Dungane's ears to tingle, simply because he had been so long away from gatherings like these that his morals had become a bit stiff, and the bursts of feminine laughter grated on his ears.

The Pen and Paletters were all men, but to these feasts they brought their womenkind, and tonight the party seemed over-dressed, over-hatted and over-gay so far as Dungane could judge. He felt old and out of sorts, somehow, and was amazed to see the two English girls entering into the spirit of the night with genuine abandon.

They were winning an amount of masculine attention and admiration that also annoyed him, especially when he heard Nora giving out invitations

right and left to the men who clamored about them. He pressed her foot under the table with his own in hysterical agony when he heard her begging Dawson to bring Mrs. Dawson to tea the next day. There had been a succession of Mrs. Dawsons in Dungane's memory, and this evening the lady was the one whom Dawson boarded with, a friendly female with much *passementerie* who made no denial of the new relationship so delicately thrust upon her.

Then Ackerson began to eat glasses, chewing up a cordial tumbler as though it were a peppermint, and it made Dungane fairly writhe. It was true he had been told it was only a trick, but he couldn't understand it and he always expected that Ackerson would gash himself or take a fit or something. And yet those two girls were gazing with parted lips and eyes big like children's at a circus, while the nauseating specialty proceeded.

Then MacFeeters, who had had too much wine, came over and seized Madge's hand on the pretense of palmistry, and through the cigarette smoke and the laughter he heard De Long begin a *chanson*:

"Our delight is at night;
We know a good cabaret
Where is free company.
What tho' a fellow be dull or sad,
Marcelle and Mimi are there.
Fill up the glass; let each student lad
Drink to his damsel fair."

He knew the verses that were to follow, and he took advantage of the burst of applause to fairly drag the girls from the room. They had never seen him like this, and they were enjoying the fun and hated to leave it. They stepped out on the balcony overlooking the quiet street and drew a deep breath.

"How fresh this feels," he exclaimed, "after all that smoke!"

"But your friends—" began Madge. "Won't they be offended at our leaving like this before dinner is over?"

"It won't be over until morning," half-laughed Dungane. It was really impossible for him to explain.

"That droll Mr. MacFeeters!" rippled Madge. "He was telling me a story. He had just asked the lady in the corn-colored bodice if she had a dumb waiter in her flat and she told him she had them dumb and blind! Fancy!"

"He's frightfully witty!" exclaimed Nora.

"You wouldn't care for him when he's sober!" said Dungane savagely.

"Why, how horrid you are!" protested Madge.

Dungane mopped his forehead. "They bore me," he said; "I hate these half-baked bohemians. Then they go too far. They don't know when to stop."

"It's like the Bal Boulier in Paris! All the artists are like that," cooed Nora; "they don't mean anything. You're cross!"

"No, it isn't that," weakly began Dungane; "but they're not our kind, at all!"

"Who are our kind then?" asked Madge. "They seemed to like us and to like you! It's bohemia—that's all—the bohemia you told us of. And we are glad to be here! We're not children!"

Dungane laughed drily. "That is not the bohemia I told you of," he said. "If I thought this old town hadn't a more real bohemia than this—well, I'd go back. Don't judge us by that crowd. They're not Real Workers!"

"But they're awfully jolly!" asserted Nora, as the music and the laughter swelled out to them again.

"That's it. Real artists and writers aren't so infernally jolly as all that. They don't have the time! Wait until you meet some of our own kind!"

"But even our own kind have to eat dinner," put in Madge. She was getting a little tired of Dungane's superior tone, and she had not had her ice-cream.

"But we don't call it a splash!" protested Dungane. He was cooling off now, far from the smoke and the mandolins, and was thinking of another place, within a stone's throw of this, where a dozen or more serious ones, graduated from the frolicsome Pen

and Palette stage, gathered each night for a simple dinner in one room set apart from them at Garcona's, after days of genuine literary and artistic toil, without evening clothes or passementerie. How long it was since he had been at Garcona's! He wondered if he dared go there tonight—just to show these two girls the difference.

"In every condition," he began, "you find the real people and the fakirs. The Pen and Paletters don't come here to dine, but to splash! Now, I know a place—"

"Another place! Really!" cried the girls together.

"Yes—quite different! Where people you've heard of go for dinner each night. They're tired and they don't have to dress or to talk, if they don't wish to. They'd kill a musician if he tried to perform there. They're genuine! Now there's Voysin, the poet—you've seen lots of his stuff—and Mary Maine Woods, who does the child pictures, and old Brisket, the book reviewer—an intellectual giant—and little Mirza Pascha, the photographer, and Howser, the music critic. They don't eat glass or put their feet on the table. They're our own kind!"

It was a burst of eloquence that fairly won the girls over to his side. "Where is it?" asked Madge eagerly. "Do take us there."

"Garcona's is an Italian place—not a regular hotel like this. Old Garcona runs it, and his fat wife does the cooking. It's a bit of genuine bohemia—the only one in this blooming market-place of a town! If Voysin only wouldn't have that bear!" he mused, half to himself. He was wondering how the girls would take the bear—if they would understand.

"A bear?" they cried with delight; "a live bear?"

"Yes; an Italian friend of Garcona's brought the mother, a dancing bear, over from the other side. The little cub was born on the ship and the Garconas took it and brought it up on the bottle. Voysin has lived there with them for years and he made a pet of the bear and it developed all sorts of clever

ways. It eats a table-d'hôte dinner, for instance, right through. It was rather funny when it was small—but now—well, it does look a little bit startling to see it there, unless you know."

"Fancy a bear at the table, Nora," said Madge. "I knew I should enjoy New York!"

Just then Dungane saw Dawson and MacFeeters bearing down on them through the room beyond. They bore souvenir fans and tiny paint-pots of ice-cream, which they waved in the air toward the group on the balcony, singing a chorus, very much off the key:

"We're all good fellows, boys,
And every mother's son of us
Would share his fortune, heart and soul—
We're all good fellows, boys,
And every brother's one of us
Just loves his little pipe and bowl—"

"Come!" said Dungane between his teeth. Guiding the girls through a window opening into another room, then through the hallway, he rushed them down some side-stairs into the street and had them in a waiting taxicab before they quite knew what he was about.

"To Garcona's!" he said to the man as he got in after the girls, chuckling at the thought of the escape. He was feeling quite high-minded. He was saving the girls, as he thought, from undesirable associations. And they were in the mood to enjoy anything, although Madge was just a trifle put out. She had seen the ice-cream in the distance.

"And now for our own kind!" she ejaculated, as the cab rolled smoothly over the tar pavement.

"And the bear!" giggled Nora.

Now as they proceeded around a corner and turned into a block further west, they became conscious of a crowd in the street and considerable excitement at the entrance to a modest dwelling, which Dungane recognized at once as Garcona's. He could see a patrol-wagon backed up to the curb and he told the man on the box to stop and turn.

"What is it?" asked Nora excitedly,

but with English decorum they kept their seats, their faces now being turned away from the disturbance. Dungane saw to his astonishment a group of familiar literary figures, protesting indignantly, being escorted from the door of Garcona's to the waiting vehicle, by men in plain clothes. Last of all waddled the bear—his dinner napkin still strung about his neck, while a wild shout went up from the street mob as the patrol-wagon started off at a great speed, the crowd pursuing with a whoop.

The street was deserted now and Dungane told the grinning man to drive up to the curb, motioning him to silence with an eloquent wink that was a threat and a promise rolled into one.

"I say, what is it?" asked Madge with a delicious rising inflection, as Dungane jumped out, shutting the cab door on the girls behind him. He went down the street to Garcona's door and ran up the steps, but he rattled the door-knobs in vain. He peered into the dim hall beyond and battered on the glass.

A stealthy hand admitted him softly and then closed and locked the door again. It was a weeping waiter, who recognized him at once, with an ejaculation, and led him to where Madame

Garcona sat sobbing and calling on the saints in tearful Italian, the while beating her heels upon the floor. When she saw Dungane she wailed anew.

"Signor Garcona, *Madre mia!* Signor Garcona—the police have taken him—and the ladies and gentlemen—they have taken them! And all because Signor Garcona did not have the license to sell the wine—*Dio mia!*" And she went off in another torrent of grief, a faithful woman from the kitchen murmuring comfort and patting the copious back.

And Dungane, realizing his inability to cope with the situation, rejoined the Veritys, still wondering, but happy. They were enjoying the excitement, rejoicing in having found Dungane!

He got in beside them, grim but smiling. He realized suddenly that had they arrived but one minute before they would now be prisoners on their way to the night-court with the Real Workers. He let the cool night air blow on his forehead for a minute before he told the man to go back to the Royale.

"Aren't we going to see the bear?" cried Nora, her eyes alight.

"No, we'll splash tonight!" laughed Dungane. "You girls seemed to like that crowd! I'll be the bear!"



THE GRASS

By Edward Wilbur Mason

AROUND the world once more your banners sweep,
 O thou triumphant legion of the grass!
 You shake the hill and valley as you pass;
 Across the rivers and the seas you leap.
 The music of your marching wakes from sleep
 The forest and the field and the morass.
 And in thy fragrant train, a starry mass
 The blossoms all like constellations creep.

What power is thine, O army of sweet peace!
 To you at last all victories belong;
 All battlefields are thine beneath the sun;
 To every sorrow thou dost bring surcease.
 What vanquished empire but hath heard thy song?
 Answer, O Egypt; answer, Babylon!

A HERESY OF KNOWLEDGE

By Gertrude Elizabeth MacQuigg

“THE cloudburst! Mother of God, save us!”

From all sides the appeal was echoed in tones of fright and dismay; in musical Spanish, guttural Mexican, Yankee English, mixed and mingled curses, prayers, sharp orders, stern commands, rising and blending into a conglomerate wail of anguish. The camp was a confusion of hurrying officers and excited men. Up the jagged volcanic hillside they clambered, clinging to the roots of mesquite that sprawled along the rocks.

With incredible rapidity the torrent swept down the cañon, a wall of yellow water gathering resistlessly into its chaos the heavy army wagons laden with supplies and forage, the snorting mules and every man of that large detachment of United States troops. Before its impetuous rush were flung gnarled trees and huge boulders. Tortuous passes were torn out of the rock, undermining old landmarks.

There were two spectators to the tragedy—a man and a girl. The man was a small, dark Mexican, wiry and strong. He stood only a few feet above the water, gazing stolidly on the scene before him with a calmness that had more of indifference than of courage in it. He wore corduroys that hung loosely over his heavy frame, about his neck a gay silk kerchief, at his waist a huge pistol and cartouche box. In his hand he held with seeming carelessness a long lasso. From the rocks above him the girl watched with the same quietude of posture that characterized the man. The hand that shaded her eyes was steady, the other hung relaxed at her side. There was something of the Castilian delicacy in her features. Her skin was fair, though her hair was dark as the swarthy Mexi-

can's. The crude insistence of flaming sunlight gave them the appearance of unreality. It burned her hair into warmth and color, glorifying even her rough dress and softening the features of the man into a semblance of nobility.

Swiftly, but with a seeming deliberation that robbed the action of its suddenness, the man gathered the lariat deftly together and leaning forward swung it full into the seething waters. In a moment the line grew taut. The lasso, true to the aim, was bound fast about the shoulders of a man floating with the débris in the stream. Camillo Noriega pulled slowly but firmly, drawing the body to one side, then stepping carefully down, dragged it toward him. Swaying slightly, he climbed the bank steadily, doggedly, until he laid his burden on the level ground. The girl knelt silently and wiped away the yellow foam with her kerchief. Loosening the torn uniform, she bent closer over the soldier.

“He lives, father.”

Without a word the Mexican swung the body into his arms and started across the mesa.

“You will hold him for ransom?” the girl queried as she walked beside him, holding her kerchief to the wound on the officer's head, which had begun to bleed.

Camillo nodded. “He is a captain,” he told her, speaking in a loud, shrill voice, for the roar of the torrent was in their ears.

“The flood water is terrible, father; it is all-powerful,” and she shivered slightly.

“You are timid, little one,” he assured her almost caressingly. “Life is sweet to you.”

“Perhaps it was so to all those dead scattered over the desert tonight.”

"Our day will come," he said with fatalistic indifference.

In the court-yard of the hacienda stood an old Mexican woman. Without question she followed them through the living-room into a bed-chamber, where Camillo left the two women in charge. On all sides were unmistakable signs of rich forage and waylaid pack-teams. The walls and floor glowed with warm-hued rugs and blankets, and over the roughly made bedstead lay a silken coverlet.

Inocencia scarcely left the prisoner's bedside during the days of fever and delirium that followed. There were hours of quiet, when she studied the strong, regular features and pushed back his fine light hair with her cool fingers. It was sun-golden, she thought, vaguely, and his eyes that looked at her so strangely were blue as the heavens. Her father, who talked English fluently, had taught her much of what he knew, and she was quick to learn. Thus she often understood the wild jargon of words and phrases and tried to find a meaning in their confusion. One day he looked at her quite sanely.

"You are my mother," he said slowly, his hand brushing her cheek. At other times he would raise himself with sudden strength and cry: "Forward, men! To hell with renegade thieves and plunderers!" Ravings such as these aroused her to a grave dissatisfaction with her life. Hitherto, absolute fearlessness had been the highest good she knew!—now, new distinctions between right and wrong crowded into her consciousness. She dreaded his return to reason and his consequent judgment of her. But it was Camillo who stood alone by the bedside to greet the returning mind, and who sternly, cruelly, laid the situation before the young man.

Gerald Leland grasped at the truth weakly, and, thinking it a dream, fell asleep. Later he awoke to find Inocencia standing at the window. He watched her silently; probably she was an apparition.

"Come here!" he demanded. She

came to him and he reached out and touched her. "You are real," he said soberly, letting her hand fall. "What is that sound?"

"The river," she replied in Spanish; "it has been swollen since the cloudburst, nearly three weeks ago."

"The cloudburst—ah!—tell me!"

In the creed of Inocencia was no consideration for weakness; hence she spared him not at all, but drew the horror of those days with un pitying simplicity. It was only when she saw his face blanch and his lips quiver that she paused. He was so young.

"You are held for ransom," she concluded unsteadily.

"How old are you?" he asked irrelevantly.

"Seventeen—"

"You have eyes like my mother's—God pity you!" He turned away wearily, his shoulders shaking convulsively.

Before the tragedy of the disaster Gerald's own dangerous position sank into insignificance, yet he was young and the love of life was strong within him. His strength came back quickly and with it a gladness of spirit not to be repressed. Besides, there was always Inocencia.

Two weeks later they stood on the bank of the sluggish yellow stream. Inocencia was alluringly lovely. There were charms in captivity, even on the edge of the desert.

"How beautiful you are!" he burst forth. She did not turn, but her cheeks crimsoned. "I wonder you are not the queen of the bandits," he laughed. "Think of ruling a gay band of thieves and plunderers! Undoubtedly, you will marry a robber chief and—"

The girl interrupted him passionately: "So it might have been, had you never come to teach me, even in your delirium, to underrate the fearless courage of our men, to repulse my lover, to shrink from my father. Even now they are beyond the mountains making arrangements for your ransom!"

"Did I come willingly?"

The girl raised her hands impulsively, then as suddenly let them fall at her

side. "I—I might even have been happy."

The man caught hold of her. "Look at me, Inocencia!" As their eyes met he continued with a sublime egoism: "You could not have been happy before I came. You have yet to learn the meaning of life. Don't you understand, child?"

She scarcely heard his words as she shrank from the appeal in his eyes.

"Inocencia," he said softly, and again, "Inocencia!" They were so young and she was very beautiful.

About them rose the desert mountains with their shifting shadows of blue and purple, their ridges afire with sunlight. A mist of gold lay over the earth, warming even the gaunt mesquite, the palo verdi and the cacti into vivid, unnatural life. Through it the clouds glared marvelously radiant. Something of the fierceness, the passionate intensity of the arid country, entered into Gerald Leland, and for a time he forgot the call of the old life—the life of action and ideals—forgot the future that was held out to the "youngest captain," the chance for advancement that was denied many an older man; the love of his soldiers and the praise of his colonel. After a while Inocencia drew away from him.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Don't you see?" she pleaded. "It is all wrong—wrong!"

"No, I don't see," he promptly told her; then added playfully: "What do you know of right or wrong, you desert child? When I take you away I shall have to teach you—so—" and he leaned forward to kiss her.

"Ah, listen to me," she insisted. "In the days when you lay sick you told me much of that wonderful world in which you belong—of brave men and good women who would help you attain a great place among them. You drew me pictures in which I could never have place; sometimes you spoke of your mother. Don't you see?" Her voice broke; then she went on slowly, almost monotonously: "I understand so well, and you have taught me—I—I am not fit!" She half rose, but he drew her back.

"You are you," he cried, flinging aside all objections, "and I want you."

The breath of the desert hung close about them, their hearts attuned to its warmth.

"You will teach me, carino?"

"We will both learn—to love."

As the time of Camillo's return approached Inocencia grew restless and uneasy; her eyes seemed to grow larger and deeper. One day Gerald took her face between his hands and searched the meaning.

"When I was a little chap," he said, "I used to stand on tip-toe and look into my mother's eyes as I am into yours—and there amid the wonder of what I saw was my own face. I used to dream that when I was a man I would again look and see reflected all that I had made of life."

Inocencia slipped her hands over his. "You—aren't going to cry?" he stammered. "Do you fear your father's wrath, when I tell him?"

"No—you will give him gold in exchange."

"I think I understand," he continued, "I've tossed your opinions of right and wrong to the winds, and the love for your people—but I've given you all that was best of me instead."

"Yes," she sobbed, "yes."

Inocencia had come to a conclusion born during long nights of thought and ceaseless questioning. It was made possible by the setting of her life, the dramatic value of every-day happenings as compared with a more civilized existence. The decision was not easy to reach, and there were times when it seemed unnecessary, when their love hung like a golden mist before the future; but afterward came hours of clear thinking and high resolve. Gradually, as the days passed, their beauty and wonder shifting into a perspective as unreal and elusive to her mind as that of the desert to her vision, her sacrifice became the one reality of her life. Because of his love, he meant all that a woman of his own race, class and education might claim. Listening to his ambitions and plans, his hopes and dreams, she became convinced of the

impossibility, the ineffectuality, of trying to take a place by his side. Once she fully grasped this fact she clung to it with the primitive strength of finality and because of the singleness of thought she failed to realize the cruelty of her plan. His love was the price she paid that he might be free and untrammelled to win success.

The purity of his faith, his boyhood, the very dreams which she had inspired hung also in the balance, but to such distinctions she was blind. She knew only that she should never be a drawback or hindrance to him. Pitilessly soon the time came. Inocencia went forth to meet it bravely—proudly. In the afternoon Camillo Noriega had returned and an hour after moonrise they would start—her father, Gerald, the three Mexicans and, if she willed—herself.

She and Gerald stood alone in the darkness. About them hung the warm purple night—the mysterious desert night.

"Shall I not speak to him now?"

"Wait, carino," softly she spoke, with an infinite pity in her heart that she must hurt him so. With a passion of longing she claimed the moment. Gradually the mountains became outlined against light. The color deepened and above their splintered peaks appeared the desert moon—a huge, misshapen mass of gold, losing in color and gaining in symmetry as it rose. Around it, in elusive rainbow shades, was an aureole. Slowly she drew away from him. "Is it not beautiful?" Something in her tone stung him.

"We have said so a thousand times, child. Is there regret in your heart at leaving it?"

"No," she replied coldly, "because I'm not going to leave it."

He waited a moment for this strange new mood to pass; as she still remained silent, he touched her caressingly. Inocencia flung his arms aside and laughed—a laugh that rippled and shook, mocked and scorned, in a breath, a laugh that chilled the listener with its abandon of mirth and heartlessness. Her hands were clenched

in the folds of her dress. Why did he not speak! A Mexican would have burst forth in wrath, not half so terrifying as the silence of this great tall man silhouetted against the sky. Her laugh rose again, softly, hysterically.

"Stop!" He caught her wrist in a grip that made her wince.

"Do your white sisters never play with a man?" She saw his shoulders grow tense and rigid.

"I—I—I can't understand," he said, as if groping for the words. "A woman does not give a man the love you have given me while playing with him."

"You might have escaped," she laughed. The hold on her wrist relaxed. He shrank from her unsteadily; a cry came to her lips, but she stifled it.

"Inocencia—" he began, his voice thrilling with an appeal to lost ideals, then concluded falteringly: "Even your name is a lie!" Had he been less blind in his passion of pain and outraged faith he might have noticed the quivering of her lips, the wild rising and falling of her young breast. Had the light been brighter, he might have recognized the look of hopelessness in her eyes. As it was, he saw only her attitude. He turned away, then came back slowly. "How beautiful you are—God pity you!" even as he said a thousand years ago to a girl bending over his bedside.

She stood quite still until he was lost in the purple shadows and she heard his voice, dull, monotonous, in reply to her father.

All at once she slipped to her knees, her arms outflung, and, like the flowers that raise their beauty to the desert sun, drooped until she lay outstretched upon the warm, dry earth. The clatter of approaching horses broke the hush about her. They dashed so close that a rock hurled from a glancing hoof struck her sharply.

An inarticulate cry escaped her lips, a speechless sound belonging only to the coming in of life or death. Across the loma distance silenced the rhythmic beat of hoofs; and solitude and desolation claimed the desert.

THE BOMB PLANTERS

By Alfred Damon Runyon

MAYBE you remember the time—it wasn't so long ago—that a bomb exploded in a footpath across a vacant lot near the capitol in Callan and an unknown man was killed.

You read in the papers, perhaps, that the chief justice of the State was due to walk across that path, bound for dinner, just as the bomb went off.

He'd struck the head of the path—the explosion was in the middle, a hundred yards from him. Perhaps you recall that he was with his little granddaughter.

The explosion didn't leave anything of that bomb for the smart detectives to examine. If it had they would have found it was the product of the greatest genius in that line the world has ever known—which is me.

You recall the justice didn't know anything about that unknown man—didn't even see him until he heard the explosion and pieces of human flesh commenced raining down upon him.

Well, I knew the unknown. I didn't come forward to identify him when they were moving heaven and earth to find out who he was, for reasons of my own.

They printed a lot of rot about it all in the papers at the time. Hardly a word of what they said was true. They were guessing.

The papers fighting the unions said it was a plan laid by the Middle Amalgamation of Miners to kill the chief justice. The first part of that statement—about the miners—is a lie, but a lot of people believed it, just the same. It was true about the plot against the chief justice.

The papers supporting the unions said it was an accident. They were also away off. I am one of the few men living that know the whole story, and I wouldn't be telling it now if we were not going to Russia and join the nihilists, and by the time this sees the light of day it will be too late for the wooden-headed detectives to find us.

No one had anything to do with that bomb but us, the League of Freedom.

I organized the League of Freedom. There were only a few of us, but what we lacked in numbers we made up in enthusiasm. We used to meet down on Waxahone street right under the noses of the police and carry on our work.

I suppose some people would call us anarchists, but that is neither here nor there. We had nothing to do with the unions; they wouldn't have let us, probably.

It was during the strikes when the tyrant capitalists were carrying matters with a high hand, and while we might have done the unionists a lot of good, they went about their plans with so much publicity that we dared not offer our services. They objected to what we called violence.

So we worked in secret—Hector Mattei, the Italian fruit vender from Chicago, a good man, but stupid; Mack Rehak, the Austrian, willing, but unbalanced in the head, as shall be shown; Antonio Masseni, a Sicilian and a bright fellow; Pablo Martinez, a Spaniard, who foolishly killed his wife and then got sent to the asylum; and myself—Master Workman of them all.

How we became associated is much too long a story to tell. It started with an idle discussion in a boarding-

house on Blake street where we were all staying, and it came to be a brotherhood of blood.

As I remember, the discussion was over the strike, and we suddenly found that we were all agreed as to the best means of ending it with a victory for the unions. Our opinion was death to the leaders of the oppressionists, starting with the governor and going straight down the line of mine-owners.

"Well, why not?" spoke up Pablo, the Spaniard, and we all looked at one another, startled at the bigness of the idea. Why not, indeed?

Thus the League of Freedom sprang into being.

I need not go into details concerning our organization. It developed that Mattei, Masseni, Martinez and myself were no strangers to the work. I can still recall Chicago and the Haymarket; Masseni had been in New Orleans; Mattei knew of Naples and New York; and Martinez had fled Madrid because of that misdirected bomb intended for the young king. Rehak was the only newcomer into the fold.

As I have said, he was willing. He was an enormous fellow, as stolid as a smokestack. I don't believe he ever had an original idea in his life. He was a smelter hand, but only worked enough to keep himself in tobacco and beer after paying his board. With it all, however, he was absolutely fearless. He did but little talking and a whole lot of acting when it became necessary, and, strange as it may seem, he was the one I selected as my first lieutenant. He did what he was told and asked no questions.

Pablo Martinez first suggested the idea that started us to work. We had talked and planned for some weeks along different lines. Practically we had decided upon the then governor as our first offering to freedom, when Martinez said:

"The fountain head of the whole iniquitous system is not the governor, not the State militia, not the mine-owners, but the court which gives them the power to do as they do. And the head of that court is, in effect, the pri-

mary cause. Gentlemen, consider the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court!"

True enough! We at once remembered the many decisions handed down by the highest tribunal in the State sustaining the course of the governor and the militia. Here indeed was the chief foe to society.

From that moment the chief justice was a marked man. Of course our plan did not immediately develop, but he was never lost sight of in our mind. We spoke of others, but always we reverted to the chief justice.

It was I who finally evolved the idea of the plant. In my idle moments, which were not few, I used to go up to the capitol to make observations. I saw the chief justice leave the building at noon on several occasions and noted that he was always alone; that he always took a footpath across a big vacant lot leading down to the main street. There he took a tramway car.

Sitting on the capitol steps one day and looking off toward the mountains, it occurred to me that a bomb placed in that footpath and accurately timed might—well, the idea almost took my breath away. It was magnificent!

The only difficulty seemed to be the question of time. So, without saying anything to my companions at first, I went to the capitol daily at noon and watched.

With the accuracy of the sun the chief justice came down the north steps and started toward the city at five minutes past twelve. He was a hale old man, who walked briskly, and in three minutes he would reach the centre of the path in the vacant lot. He was always alone. Few others used the path at that particular moment. Providence seemed to adjust the whole matter.

I timed the chief justice for many days and he never failed me. I made mental note of a certain spot in the path, covering a radius of about twelve feet. There might be a few seconds' variance, but never a whole minute in the time from day to day that the chief justice struck it.

I was planning a time bomb, under-

stand. Then a characteristic of the chief justice—a simple thing it was—caused me to change my plan. I noticed that he always walked with his eyes upon the ground. He would frequently stoop and pick up some object which he would immediately cast away again. It was some time before I fully understood this, and then I discovered that the old man's eyes were attracted by any bright object on the ground they might encounter, and that he would pick it up. It was force of habit, I suppose.

I tried him on this point a half-dozen times, because it gave me an idea. I dropped a small pocket-knife in the path just before he was due to cross it. He picked it up, examined it and put it in his pocket. I dropped a small mirror, then a bright bit of ribbon, and again a coin. He picked up every one.

It was an unconscious habit with him, I suppose, that close inspection of the ground as he hastened homeward, but it occurred to me that it was simply another adjustment of Providence.

I confided my plan to my companions, and I was at once a hero in their eyes. We had no time to lose, however, as court would soon adjourn for the Summer. So we set to work on our plant. It was my brain which conceived the idea and it was my ingenuity which fashioned the bomb. It seemed simple, but oh, it was a marvel of genius!

A common, cheap alarm-clock and a pound of dynamite would have answered the purpose of a time bomb, but I used nitro-glycerine, which I myself boiled out of dynamite. Some fine copper wire and a dry battery comprised the rest of the bomb, all carefully enclosed in a tin box.

From the box led a tiny wire. The slightest jerk on this wire would release the mechanism inside and explode the bomb.

To make assurance doubly sure we made a duplicate bomb, and one Sunday went out and tried it. We planted the bomb in the ground with the loose wire sticking out. I tied a light string to the wire and then we retired a couple of hundred yards. I gave the string the

lightest sort of jerk. The explosion was instantaneous. It was not loud, but it raised the earth for twenty feet around to an enormous height and left a hole big enough to bury a team of mules.

It was admirable. We went back to the city with joy in our hearts.

We selected the following Saturday as the day for justice. I picked Rehak as the man to plant the bomb, and the big Austrian was delighted. I gave him the most minute instructions and he understood. He was to plant the bomb at four o'clock in the morning when there was small chance of detection, but I took him with me that afternoon to look over the ground and point out the exact spot where I wanted the bomb placed so there would be no mistake.

We were walking quietly up Sixteenth street and started to cross at Broadway near the scene of our proposed plant. They call this "Dead Man's Curve" in Callan, and well they may, because the automobiles, street-cars and bicycles whiz past there in a terrifying manner.

I noticed a young woman and a golden-haired little girl, of perhaps six years, coming across the street toward us. The child suddenly ran ahead of the woman a little ways.

Then I heard the muffled roar of an auto horn and a scream from the woman. A huge touring-car was sweeping down upon the child at tremendous speed. The babe had stopped, apparently dazed. The woman stood inert, staring. There didn't seem a chance in the world for the child, as my mind recalls the panorama, when Rehak, with a low growl, propelled his huge frame forward, lifted the child with a sweep of his long arms out of harm's way, and then went down beneath the impact of the great machine himself. The woman at once fainted.

The machine came to a sudden stop—I'm surprised it was not totally wrecked after hitting Rehak—and an old man climbed hastily out of the tonneau.

It was none other than the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. His chauffeur sat in the driver's seat, look-

ing at the scene in a bored manner. The child was unhurt and the woman quickly recovered, but Rehak had a broken shoulder.

The chief justice insisted that he take him to a hospital at once. A big crowd was gathering and, while I felt like objecting, I did not want to create a scene or start an inquiry by the police as to Rehak's identity, so I nodded to Rehak and we all climbed into the machine, the woman and the child too, because the chief justice insisted on taking them to their homes and because the lady was also anxious to see how badly Rehak was hurt.

The chief justice, myself and the driver crowded into the front seat; Rehak, who had said not a word all this time, was in the rear seat with the woman, who held the little girl on her lap.

The chief justice ordered the driver to go to a hospital and to run slowly so as not to jar Rehak. I don't believe the big Austrian felt much pain, but you couldn't tell from his ox-like face. He was leaving everything to me.

The chief justice did most of the talking as we ran along the avenue. He seemed all upset. He berated the driver for running fast, especially turning corners, and I believe he was really sorry for the accident.

At the hospital we had to wait in the reception-room a short time while they were getting a place ready for Rehak. They knew the chief justice at the hospital, because one of the sisters called him by name, and he seemed to be a person of some importance there, from the way they bustled around.

Rehak was sitting down, the justice hovering over him like an old woman. The Austrian kept watching me as though looking for instructions. The woman and the little girl, who had now recovered from her fright and was taking an interest in affairs, were also in the room. I noticed that the woman, who was the child's mother, was constantly looking at the chief justice in a curious fashion.

The child was watching Rehak, whose burly form completely hid a

large rocking-chair and hung over, in wide-eyed astonishment. I don't imagine for a minute that she realized what he had done for her, but something about the huge Austrian seemed to attract the child. She did seem to know that he was hurt, however, for there was a world of compassion in her gaze. Finally she went up to him, laid a tiny hand on his knee and murmured: "Nice man."

A curious startled look came over Rehak's stolid face as he gazed at the child and then looked inquiringly at me.

"Kiss me," the youngster said in a commanding tone, as of one accustomed to being obeyed.

"Why, Beth!" remonstrated the mother, astonished.

"Kiss me!" ordered the child again, looking up at Rehak confidently.

The Austrian shot another curious glance at me, an indescribable expression on his face—like a big Newfoundland dog submitting to the caresses of a puppy. Then, with no little pain pictured in his face, he leaned slowly forward and kissed the child on the lips.

"Bless my soul!" said the chief justice. The child danced back to her mother and a nurse broke up the tableau by entering and announcing that they were ready for the patient. I whispered a few words of instruction to Rehak, telling him to give just as little information about himself as possible, and then we waited to hear the result of the doctor's examination.

While we were sitting in the reception-room the chief justice turned to the woman and said:

"May I inquire your name? Mine is Mahlon—John Mahlon."

She turned slightly pale, then smiled and replied:

"Mine is also Mahlon—Mrs. John Mahlon, Junior."

The old man hopped right out of his chair.

"Madam, are you jesting?" he demanded, getting really excited.

"Not at all," she said, quite cool now. "I am your daughter-in-law and this is your grandchild, Beth. I didn't

know it, however, until the sister called you by name."

All this was Greek to me, of course, and they paid as little attention to me as if I had not been there.

The old man was pretty white above his choker collar as he stood looking first at the woman and then at the child. He walked over to the little girl, who gazed up at him, clear-eyed and confiding, took her face between his hands and looked long into her eyes.

"Well, well," he said at last, and in a tired way, "Jack, sure enough. How long have you been here?" he asked the woman.

"Nearly six months," she said. "Jack is still out in Goldfield and has done very well. He sent us here to establish a home, as he is going to sell out and come to Callan as soon as possible."

"Does he ever speak of me?" the old man asked softly.

"Oh, yes; quite often," she said. "He was going to call on you as soon as he came and show you your grandchild. Seven years is such a long time that he hoped you had forgiven him for—for—marrying—me," she continued rather disconnectedly.

She seemed on the verge of tears now. The old man put his hand on her head, saying quietly:

"My child, I had never seen you. Of course I was much displeased with Jack because I—he—well, because I had other plans. I beg your pardon," and the old fellow leaned forward and kissed her lightly on the forehead. "We will send him a joint telegram tonight," he added.

The child tugged at the coat-tails of the chief justice.

"Kiss me!" she commanded, just as she had spoken to Rehak.

"Bless my heart!" ejaculated the chief justice, while the woman sat down and dabbed at her eyes with a handkerchief.

You can gather as much from all this as I did. They didn't seem to realize that I was there at all, and I was too much interested in the little tableau to raise a disturbance. Once I felt like

offering a suggestion, and that was when the old man remarked:

"Your new home shall be with me," he said. "After Jack's mother died I kept the old house going for his sake; but after he left I closed it—I thought for good. We'll have a real old-time house-warming."

I had a mind to mention that it would be wholly unnecessary, as he would be unable to be present.

The entrance of a doctor finally relieved the situation and brought them back to life.

"He is not hurt very much," said Sawbones. "Just a broken shoulder. He can go home in the morning."

"The bill comes to me," said the chief justice, and we started to go. Not for a lot of money would I have gone back to town with them in the machine. I made some excuse about living near the hospital and escaped, while they were still smiling at each other, hardly hearing my protestations.

With Rehak in the hospital it seemed as though we would have to postpone our scheme, but Pablo Martinez and the others, after hearing my story, volunteered to plant the bomb. I decided that Martinez was the man, and early the following morning he took the tin box and a small trowel, and placed the bomb beneath the ground in the footpath. He buried it about a foot, then scattered twigs over the spot so the fresh earth would not be apparent.

The tiny wire, bent to a little hook at the end, was left sticking out, but in such a way that it did not show.

The rest of the job was mine.

I bought a woman's pocketbook. It was one of these affairs resembling a small suit-case, which the women were all carrying then, and I paid a good price for it, too. I tied a piece of red ribbon in a bowknot to the handle so it would be all the more conspicuous.

With the pocketbook under my coat I went to the capitol shortly after eleven o'clock, took a look in the Supreme Court and saw it was in session, with the chief justice presiding; then loafed

about the war relic museum in the basement until twenty minutes past eleven.

At that time I went down the footpath to where the bomb was planted. The only people in sight were over on Colfax, a half-block away, and they were paying no attention to a lone pedestrian taking a short cut. I knew where to look for the wire end, of course. As soon as I located it I stooped and gently secured the hook in one of the rings which fastened the handle of the pocketbook. Then I went on, making a swift circuit, and returning to the capitol took up my station on the north steps.

There was nothing at all calculated to attract suspicion in this. Scores of others were sitting about on the steps and benches, enjoying the sun of a glorious turquoise morning. My eyes kept turning toward the footpath, however, and I was in a sweat of nervous anxiety. You can imagine the chances of the thing.

It was taking the enormous risk of about 199,999 to 1, for the reason that I was depending on a solitary person out of a two hundred thousand population crossing the path and picking up that pocketbook.

The only basis for such a risk was the fact that it had so happened during my observations, but as I sat on the steps I suddenly realized how casual those observations had been.

But the die was cast and I could only sit and wait, looking at my watch about every second.

The justice was behind-time. As the minute hand slipped around to twelve and then on to five minutes past, my heart almost stopped beating. A couple of men came out of the big doors and started down the steps as though they were going to take the path. Then they changed their direction. A man and woman coming from the other way almost turned into the path. You can imagine the condition of my nerves under these circumstances.

Six minutes past twelve, then the doors again swung outward, and the

chief justice appeared, holding one door wide. Out tripped his golden-haired grandchild.

I almost sank exhausted, and for a moment I was so terror-stricken that I wonder I did not rush forward and shout an incoherent warning. Common sense came to my rescue and I recovered.

"Root and branch," I thought. "So be it. Providence!" Down the steps they went, neither noticing me.

About the same moment I noticed a big fellow, whose left arm was bandaged to his side, and whose appearance was strangely familiar to me, appear at one side of the lot at a right angle to the path.

I watched him for a moment and made out Mack Rehak.

"Ah-ha!" I thought. "Faithful old Mack! Couldn't remain away when he knew the good work was going on."

It immediately occurred to me that Martinez, Masseni and Mattei were probably loitering about somewhere ready to join the crowd after the explosion.

There is a fascination about seeing the result of your plans.

Meantime the chief justice and the child were headed for the path. They were walking more slowly than the chief justice would have done had he been alone.

I was mighty thankful I had not placed a time bomb. I was also glad that the chief justice had the child with him, as I noticed he did not seem to be looking at the ground as was his custom, but at the child. The little girl, however, would be pretty certain to notice that bright bit of ribbon.

Curse that kid, now! She had commenced to run out ahead of the justice, just as she ran ahead of her mother the day of the automobile accident. She kept about twenty yards ahead of him, dancing rather than walking along.

If she picked up the pocketbook with him that far back I feared it would leave him out of range.

And that fool Rehak! What was the man doing?

He had started diagonally across

the lot toward the path, and he was hurrying. His gait was a shambling run, and he seemed to move with difficulty, probably on account of his shoulder. He reached the path near the centre and looked around.

His hesitancy was no mystery to me. I knew he was hunting for the spot where the bomb was placed. Even then I could not divine his purpose.

The thought flashed through my brain that perhaps he intended making the execution of the chief justice certain by pulling off the bomb himself, and becoming a martyr to the cause.

Then that child dancing along in front of the old man caught my eye and I saw again that smile and look on Rehak's face when he kissed her at the hospital.

"Oh, damn that kid!" I murmured, because I saw it all.

The next moment Rehak had found the pocketbook. He dropped on his knees and I could see him fumbling clumsily at it with his one free hand. He knew the mechanism all right, but he didn't know the delicacy it required to fool with that hook.

The justice had struck the head of the path, the child still in front of him. They were far out of range of the bomb.

I consoled myself with the thought that Rehak probably only meant to remove the pocketbook for the time being, just to save the kid, and that he did not mean to expose the plot, but rather postpone matters until we could get the old man alone.

I still believe that to have been his intention.

I heard a muffled roar and the pathway seemed to belly upward in the middle, as if an enormous lid had been suddenly lifted from a force beneath, and—well, I got out of that without delay and read about it in the extras.

Rehak didn't have the requisite delicacy of touch in that one hand.

I understand the child thought it was some new game gotten up for her special benefit, like Fourth-of-July fireworks, by her new and wholly delightful grandfather.

What he thought about it took columns to tell.



MEMORY

By Arthur Ketchum

DAY long, sometimes, it seems that I forget,
 And in my crowded hours comes no thought of you,
 So much there is to plan, so much to do—
 My plot to till, my house in order set—
 So goes my day—and then—O marvel yet!—
 A street-tune or a name—a sundown hue,
 And you are with me, as of old I knew,
 And I am singing, though my eyes are wet!

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

By Blanche Elizabeth Wade

WHENE'ER we ride upon the rail
And gaze the landscape o'er,
Our thoughts are turned from Nature's book
To artificial lore.

Though country air brings rosy cheeks,
We're urged (where'er there's space),
To take *this* stuff internally,
And put *that* on the face.

And when with rapture we behold
The fair and lovely hills,
In massive letters far more gay,
We find they rhyme with PILLS.

In pastures green, we love to see
The gentle, grazing kine;
Yet, in their field, lo! MALTED MILK
Bedecks a monstrous sign!

No shepherd guards the roving sheep;
Instead, a lurid blotch
Shows plainly that the sheep are safe;
They have a DOLLAR WATCH.

We see from distant farm-house quaint,
The smoke curl to the sky;
And then—THE CHEAPEST FIVE-CENT SMOKE
The foreground bids us try.

So, when we ride upon the rail,
(A journey once adored),
Tis not the landscape bores us, but
Another kind of board!



LA PEUR DU MIRACLE

Par Leo Larguier

A INSI qu'on le remarque souvent chez des gens de même métier, Ramellou et Finfotte, les deux vieux mendiants qui, tous les dimanches, se tenaient sans se regarder, chacun de son côté, sous le porche de la petite église de Blanave, se détestaient.

A ce poste, ils récoltaient dans leur gobelet de fer-blanc, poli le samedi soir avec du sable, à la fontaine, quelque trente sous qui suffisaient à les faire vivre pendant les six autres jours.

Tous les anciens avaient connu leur famille, et jamais ils n'avaient quitté le village. Ramellou ne marchait pas sans béquilles; Finfotte était à moitié aveugle, mais ils avaient vu naître plusieurs générations, tutoyaient tout le monde, et en mangeant au seuil d'une porte la soupe que leur trempait par charité quelque belle campagnarde entourée d'enfants et de poules, quelque forte Cybèle enceinte chaque année, ils disaient en clignant de leur vieux petit œil :

— Sais-tu, Marinettou, que je t'ai vue haute comme ça, jouer à la marelle avec la Mioun et Catherinette, sur le trottoir de ce pauvre M. Pilet-Roucas, le notaire...

Ils étaient deux personnages, et l'on n'imaginait pas la place sans l'un, la rue des vignes sans l'autre.

C'est pour les protéger qu'on avait cloué un écriteau de bois au tronc du pin qui montait la garde à l'entrée de la commune et sur lequel les vagabonds qui savaient lire pouvaient voir à quinze pas que la mendicité était sur ce territoire.

Par exemple, ils étaient fainéants, n'auraient pas rendu le moindre ser-

vice. Ramellou aurait pu garder les enfants, à la moisson, Finfotte aller à l'eau, tenir l'écheveau de laine aux paysannes; rien. Mais on les aimait tout de même.

Le dimanche, ils attendaient sous le porche. Les fidèles laissaient tomber un sou qui manquait parfois le gobelet et qu'un enfant rapportait et mettait dans la sébile en regardant s'il y en avait beaucoup.

Au fond, personne n'était plus heureux, et les gars du pays qui étaient au service les trouvaient engraisés lorsqu'ils venaient en permission.

Ils se maintenaient, comme on dit, et les saisons semblaient les respecter.

Lorsqu'il faisait mauvais temps, Ramellou s'asseyait chez le cordonnier, Finfotte allait chez le maréchal, et les deux vieux enfants s'amusaient à voir, l'un, s'enfoncer les clous dans les semelles; l'autre, à regarder les vols d'étincelles dans la forge sombre, pareilles à un brusque essaim de mouches d'or.

Aux beaux jours, ils avaient la rue, la place, l'ombre des arbres, et plus d'une fille, surprise dans les hautes herbes foulées avec son amoureux, leur glissait un sou de plus en sortant de la messe pour acheter leur silence.

On leur eût donné les champs et la maison du maire qu'ils auraient refusé.

Un printemps pourtant, toute cette paix fut troublée.

Le curé avait annoncé à l'office du mois de Marie que Monseigneur ayant fait don à la paroisse d'une châsse contenant les reliques d'un saint, on irait la chercher en grande pompe.

Une procession fut organisée pour le dimanche suivant. Elle devait passer à travers les terres et attirer des béné-

dictions sur les cultures. Celui dont on allait quérir un os scellé dans un coffret de cristal avait été un fameux redresseur de stropais et de béquillards, et son miraculeux pouvoir se manifestait encore. Une plaque de marbre dans l'église du chef-lieu attestait qu'une mère dévote à la relique avait obtenu la guérison de sa fille infirme; et l'abbé avait ajouté:

— Si le saint voulait, Finfotte y verrait comme moi, et Ramellou marcherait comme Rouquette, le facteur...

Donc, le dimanche suivant, un dimanche de mai, les cloches sonnèrent, et les fidèles, entourant leur pasteur, s'en allèrent à travers la campagne, entre les haies parfumées d'aubépine, dans les champs où les amandiers, les cerisiers et les abricotiers fleuris semblaient, dans les vapeurs légères de la belle matinée, de hauts buissons palpitants de vols roses et blancs de papillons. La pieuse troupe et le curé devaient être de retour à onze heures pour la messe.

Au moment où la procession quittait le village, Ramellou se hâtait en béquillant dans un sentier opposé à la grande route, et son chapeau jaune et pelé comme les coteaux argilleux dépassait la haie en fleurs.

A quelque cent mètres de Blanave, il y avait une bâtisse séculaire, qui n'était plus qu'un amas de trois murailles; cette ruine dominait le pays, et c'est vers elle qu'il se dirigeait, abandonnant pour la première fois de sa vie son poste dominical, sous le porche de l'église.

Il fut longtemps à gravir le sentier en pente; mais, comme il arrivait devant le seuil, annoncé par le bruit de ses bâtons, une tête se montra, sous un chapeau presque pareil au sien.

C'était Finfotte qui l'avait devancé!

Ils avaient deviné, en s'apercevant, le motif qui les poussait chacun à fuir le

porche, ce dimanche, et ils éclatèrent de rire:

— Ah! Ah! gueusard, dirent-ils ensemble, toi non plus, tu ne veux pas être à l'église, lorsque l'os du saint y entrera!... Ah! brigand, tu ne veux pas être guéri!..

Leur joie tomba vite cependant.

— Regarde un peu, toi qui y voit comme à vingt ans, disait Finfotte.

Et Ramellou commentait la marche de la troupe...

— Ils passent près de la vigne du maire... Les voici dans l'olivette de Castandel... Ah! ils reprennent la route.... Je vois le curé sous le dais, et la robe rouge de la fille du maréchal.... Je ne les vois plus...

Alors, ils crurent être encore trop près, et, gagnés par une peur enfantine, ils décidèrent de quitter cet abri et de s'éloigner, craignant que le miracle ne s'opérât. Qu'auraient-ils fait, Seigneur! si le saint les eût guéris, à leur âge, avec leurs habitudes? Et ils descendirent le coteau, du côté opposé au village, Finfotte appuyé sur l'épaule de Ramellou.

Le bourdon de Saint-Aube-les-Pins sonnait à toute volée, annonçant sans doute que la procession entrait dans la ville ou dans la cathédrale; et, pareils aux deux personnages de la fable, l'aveugle et le paralytique, fuyant la guérison, allaient comme ils pouvaient.

Ils ne s'arrêtèrent que lorsqu'ils entendirent, dans la limpidité de l'air, les cloches de Blanave, dont ils connaissaient bien la musique, carillonner pour le retour des paroissiens. Alors, ils s'assirent sous un arbre. Ils étaient sauvés! Le pouvoir du saint ne pouvait franchir les bleus espaces de l'azur printanier où flottaient des papillons, et Ramellou, qui était rasé comme un prêtre, attendri et narquois, regardait Finfotte avec un sourire voltairien.



HE—I no sooner bid you good night, Miss Irene, than I have an almost irresistible desire to return.

SHE—To apologize for remaining so late, I presume?

JES' ONLY HER

By John Edward Hazzard

I NEVER was in love before—
Least, not since I was ten.
An' I guess I'll be as happy
If I never am again.
Fer tho' I try to concentrate,
My thoughts is all a blur—
I ain't got nothin' on my mind except—jes' only her.

The boss, he thinks I'm crazy sure—
I'll maybe lose my job;
Fer they call me in the office,
"That absent-minded slob."
I've started out to do things, then
Fergottin' what they were;
I ain't got nothin' on my mind except—jes' only her.

I mostly, when I sit at meals,
Put sugar in my soup;
An' las' night—humph!—I squeezed our dog
Right in the chicken coop!
I sometimes sit fer hours jes'
As if I couldn't stir;
I ain't got nothin' on my mind except—jes' only her.

This love is mighty serious;
I've got it pretty bad,
Fer when my thoughts is not of her,
They're all about her dad;
He says that I'm a numbskull, but
To him it don't occur
That I've got nothin' on my mind except—jes' only her.



A MATTER OF BUSINESS

"HE married for money, did he not?"
"Yes; but his wife hasn't declared the first dividend yet."

THE WHITE PEACOCK

By Carr Alison

WITH serene indifference the white peacock looked out upon the world of men. His feet rested upon a mystic lotus flower with opalescent petals, and from his proud head sprang the royal plume that marked him king. Iridescent eyes shot gleaming fires from among the silvery white plumes of his spreading tail. In the pale moonlight land of mystery wherein he dwelt, winged dragons writhed and twisted their sinuous coils, emitting rosy sparks from their coruscating eyes. Among the oval, gray-green leaves flew—like the secret thoughts of a poet—strange birds with shadowy plumage. And everywhere in this mystic landscape bloomed pale lotus flowers with shimmering petals. And ever in the centre of this marvel of tremulous, pale green lights and rosy, opalescent gleams, stood the white peacock, the royal plume waving in the moonlight, while his serene eyes looked out upon the world of men with weary indifference.

"Truly, Jashei, you have been very successful," said the master. "The peacock is most excellently designed and the embroidery is also worthy; and moreover, your *miokuri* seems to have the bloom of time."

"Yes," said Jashei modestly. "I have perhaps somewhat succeeded. Yet could I only have worked longer—three years is very short to make a true work—" and he stopped, too diffident to express himself fully before the master.

"The western barbarians will pay well for this," mused the latter. "Instead of hanging upon the wall of the

temple, this embroidery shall go to America."

How Iris loved it! Of all her capricious passions—and she had known many—this had been the strongest, the highest, the most abiding. At the first glance this strange, beautiful thing had possessed her soul. She had known even then that some time it *must* belong to her, at whatever price.

Iris leaned back in the long wicker chair, her pale green silken garment closely enfolding her slim body. Amber light filtered through the hangings of the windows and illumined the room, which possessed a quaint, unique simplicity almost Japanese in the plain walls, the lacquered floor, and the few articles of teakwood furnishings placed here and there.

She folded her hands under her chin and fixed her eyes upon the lustrous embroidered hanging that was the only object upon the wall opposite her, save for the pale greenish-gray curtains that hung on either side and were evidently designed to conceal it at will. With a long sigh she gave herself up to uninterrupted contemplation of the beautiful creature that looked down upon her with such serene indifference from his throne on the lotus flower. The wonderful curving line of his white, lustrous neck gave her intense joy, and the sheen and quiver of the opalescent tones in his spreading plumes seemed to penetrate the most intimate recesses of her being.

How long she had waited for this day—the first that she had really felt that her treasure had belonged to her. She had prepared the shrine, but today was

the first time that her idol had occupied it. Now it was all hers, hers to dream over, hers to be worshiped! She could henceforth let her soul wander at will through that magical gray-green landscape where the white peacock dwelt. She could bathe her senses in those liquid, opalescent hues that gleamed from the silken undulations. Those delicate gradations of color, that were modulated like mysterious music, could now play upon her sensations at her desire. She saw before her a succession of days of mystic adoration, palpitating with secret delight—like a string of glowing jewels waiting to be drawn through her delicate, slim fingers.

Ah, yes! It was worth the price she had paid for it! Though when she recalled that price a film of disgust dimmed her ecstasy. The price had indeed been high. As the memories of her wedding journey came back to her the price loomed enormously before her. But resolutely she put those thoughts aside. The vision of this hour had sustained her and she could not spoil the first pure joy of possession by any suggestion of what it had cost.

So she resumed her contemplation and soon was conscious of naught save the lustrous, ever-shifting play of light and the subtle vibrations from color and lines that thrilled her being.

A sudden wrench of the handle of the door broke rudely upon the serene silence in the room. A shade of annoyance crossed her face, followed by relief as she remembered that she had locked the door. But the hand on the knob, evidently surprised at finding the door fastened, commenced to rap vigorously upon the panels. With a resigned shrug of her shoulders she rose, drew the cord that loosened the silk curtains so that the embroidery was hidden from sight, then crossed the room and turned the key. Her husband burst in, big and well-groomed, but pink with vexation.

"What on earth do you lock your door for, Iris?" he exclaimed pettishly. "It's deucedly annoying."

"Because you never remember to knock," she returned coldly.

"Well, well, why should I?" he blustered. "You're my wife!"

"Yes, that is true," said Iris wearily. She had given up trying to make him understand. "I am your wife."

"And a very pretty little wife, too!" he continued, slipping his arm around her. "Give us a kiss," and he pressed his lips first upon the cheek she hastily turned toward him, and then—in spite of her protesting hand—sought her lips.

"You're looking deucedly well, Is-sie," he said admiringly, as he stepped back and looked at her. The irritation of the unwelcome intrusion and still more unwelcome caress had brought a flush to her cheek, an unwonted sparkle to her eye, and his tone expressed his satisfaction with the bargain he had made. He again stretched out his arm.

She slipped away from his grasp. These conjugal amenities were very distasteful to her, and when she had contemplated marriage, she had not realized that these scenes would occur with such frequency. One did not mind paying a price if it would be paid in one lump sum—draw one cheque, as it were; but to be obliged to disburse the small change of affection all the time was something she had not bargained for.

She crossed over by the window and busied herself with some papers on the little bamboo writing-table. Her husband followed her.

"Saw you had two letters this morning," he said casually. "Who were they from, anyway?"

Iris was too annoyed to answer. The familiarity with which he treated her room, her letters, everything pertaining to her private life, had never seemed so odious to her. She gave the mass of papers an impatient push, dislodging a slender little brown book which fell at his feet.

He stooped and picked it up.

"Well, well! Here's your little cheque-book, isn't it!"

He had derived a great deal of en-

joyment out of the fact that he had given her a cheque-book. It was so cute for a woman to have a bank account. It was the same feeling that had prompted him to buy a sweater for his Boston terrier—not that the dog needed a sweater, but it was so cute!

He looked the book over idly as he held it in his hand. The four figures which headed the deposit column particularly pleased his eyes. It made him feel a great satisfaction with himself.

"Pretty good sort of husband, after all, ain't I, Issie?" he chuckled good-naturedly. "Not many young women start with such a fat account as this." And with the same idle curiosity that characterized everything he did, he glanced over the stubs of the cheques, smiling condescendingly at the feminine method of keeping accounts.

Suddenly his brows drew together portentously, and he turned to her abruptly.

"What's this?" he demanded. "What in the deuce did you spend fifteen hundred dollars for? Who in thunder is Yamuri?"

The heart of Iris suddenly sank within her. She had hoped to keep her precious secret intact. It had been so sweet to think that no one save herself would ever gaze upon that wonderful, that exquisite thing! She dreaded his heavy-handed comments, even though they were complimentary. But there was no help for it; she knew he would certainly insist upon seeing anything which had cost so much money.

"Well, I bought a very handsome piece of embroidery from Yamuri, dear. It is called a *miokuri*—it's very, very beautiful," she added as an explanation.

"A *mio*—what?" he demanded. "Where is it?—what is it? I want to see it!"

He looked so big, so red and so angry, that Iris did not dream of opposing him. Slowly she crossed the room and drew the curtains that hung over her treasure.

He followed her and stood in front of

it, glaring blackly at the white peacock whose eyes rested upon him with serene indifference.

"You see, dearest, it's really so wonderfully beautiful; it was made for the sacred temples. I have always wanted it since the first time I saw it—always," she said hesitatingly. "You don't mind my keeping it a little secret, just for a few days, do you, dear?" she added placatingly, as he turned and stared at her with wide, angry eyes.

"Of course, I intended to tell you about it, but I thought it would be so nice to surprise you, darling," she went on hastily and more fluently, as she saw that his rage was rising. She thought it was because she had not told him about it; he had a mania for being consulted about details.

He turned his eyes back upon the embroidery, and continued to stare at it in silence. Finally he burst forth:

"And you mean to say that *that* is worth fifteen hundred dollars?"

A certain terrible fear stole into her mind. Evidently he thought it was too valuable to be hidden away, and with terrible premonition she saw her treasure, her jewel, hanging downstairs in the garish drawing-room which she had never had the courage to reform.

With desperate resolution, she went to his side and clasped his thick, heavy hand in both her own long, slim ones.

"Yes, only fifteen hundred dollars, darling. And isn't it beautiful? Aren't you happy, Richard, that you can give your wife such beautiful things? It is so little to you. It is so much to me!"

The poor child was seizing every weapon that occurred to her, to play upon his vanity, his colossal conceit, even his amorousness.

"You know, dearest, I have always wanted it; it is so beautiful—but it is twice as lovely because *you* gave it to me!" And she slipped a slender ivory arm around his thick neck.

He shook himself free. "Beautiful! You're crazy!" he said tersely. "Fifteen hundred dollars for that! Why, it ain't worth twenty-five!"

Iris drew back and looked at him

with pitying eyes, though secretly glad that he didn't like it. He would not want it downstairs, after all!

"Well, dear, we'll leave it here then. I like it!" she exclaimed almost blithely, and patted his shoulder.

"Beautiful!" he snorted. "That faded, gray thing beautiful? Why, you're crazy, that's all! And you've been beautifully done! Fifteen hundred dollars for that gray rag? Why, you can get a stunner, all red dragons and gold—real gold—for two hundred and fifty—" and he sputtered away for some time. As he talked, his anger abated, and finally he nodded at her wisely.

"Lucky for you, my girl, that you've got a husband to look after you. I'll teach these beggars a lesson! Thought they could do you because you're a woman! Well, they'll find out that you're my wife!"

Iris looked at him, dazed, bewildered. She could not follow him. What did he mean? What would he do? What *could* he do? After all, it was there on her wall. It was certainly hers!

He strode over to the little table, fluttered the leaves of the telephone-book a moment, and then took the instrument—another of her playthings—up in his hands.

"7450 Madison Square? Hello! Yamuri's? Well, this is Richard Sedgewick—yes, Sedgewick. My wife sent you a cheque for fifteen hundred dollars in payment for an embroidered rag. Well, we don't want it, and I have stopped payment on the cheque. That's all. You can send for your what-you-may-call-it as soon as you please. No, we don't want it, and we won't have it, see? That's all!"

Iris pressed her hands to her temples in an effort to understand, and while her husband was telephoning to the bank to stop the cheque, she still stood there gazing at him, stupefied, dazed. She had neither the wit nor the strength to resist his summary action.

As he turned away from the telephone, he noticed her standing there, white and still, looking at him with anguished eyes.

Her evident misery touched him, though he mistook the cause, and he forebore the scolding which was on his lips for her. Instead, he patted her back condescendingly.

"Never mind, little girl, I'll forgive you, as long as we get the money back. Guess they won't try that game on a woman again. Fifteen hundred dollars at one swoop—well—well!" Then, catching sight of the clock, "Gracious, I must be off. I'll be back early to dinner, pet! Don't worry! We'll get the money back, all right!" and with a hearty kiss he left the room.

Iris looked after him, then put up her hand and carefully rubbed her cheek where he had kissed her, as if to efface every trace of his presence. Wearily she sank into the *chaise longue*. She was bewildered at the ease, the celerity, the simplicity, with which her magic world—her land of dreams—had been destroyed by this big, odious man, this husband whom she had deemed so stupid.

The smoldering resentment of the past few weeks of her wedded life flashed into a clear, bright flame of hatred, a flame that would never die out. She longed to make that huge bulk of coarse, masculine fiber suffer, suffer intensely, as she had suffered. Surely there must be some weapon keen enough to penetrate his thick epiderm. And if Fate should put such a one into her hand, Iris felt that now she would have the courage to use it.

As she sat there, gazing up at the white peacock, whose inscrutable eyes looked down upon her with such serene indifference, another image, born of her pain and her passionate desire for vengeance, gradually emerged from the vague turmoil of her thoughts—the dream of one different in every way from her husband, one who would understand her completely, one who would soothe her being, instead of irritating every nerve and fiber. What life would mean to her, if such a one could be beside her at moments like these, thrilled by the same ecstasy, penetrated by the same intimate joys! Her imagination was again aflame, and she saw

with prescient vision a lover advancing toward her on the pathway of life! Yes, her lover! Today her heart was unlocked for the entrance of the lover, and by the same rude hand which had so cruelly closed the door against her land of dreams.

The white peacock, gazing serenely down upon her, seemed to say: "Grieve no more! I may depart, but fear not lest beauty and joy have gone forever out of your life. They have today just entered it! The lips of your lover shall

thrill you with more intimate raptures than you have ever known! And the delicate mysteries of love shall diffuse your being with exquisite happiness, more subtle than music, ineffable as faint perfumes . . ."

The amber light filtered softly into the room, serene as before, and Iris again sat lost in contemplation, weaving the fabric of her dreams; but now among the pale, opalescent tones ran a scarlet thread, twisted of revenge and love.



LOVE

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

NO matter how long this gray world may turn
 From night to day and day to night again;
 How many centuries Time may attain;
 How many generations may sojourn
 In Kedar's tents; how many hearts may learn
 That love is but the motherhood of pain;
 How eloquent the dying of the slain;
 How dread the cries of those who live and burn—

Yet on that Judgment dawn when Earth shall cease,
 Some lover, waking in his lonely room,
 Will listen to the bugle blare of doom,
 And cry out curses on a god's caprice
 That ring aloud above devout alarms:
 "This night I should have held her in my arms!"



AN EXPLANATION

"**W**HY do they have consultations of physicians, pa?"

"Sometimes one doctor can think of something to operate for that hasn't occurred to the other."

THE DEBT

By Arthur Stanley Wheeler

“OH, so *that's* where you've been, is it? Well, no wonder you were late to lunch.”

Kitty Vaile's small, china-white teeth met with a snap behind the last word, and her still passably pretty face began to harden into the unlovely expression familiar to her husband as “the Whateley battle-mask.”

“I might have known it,” she jerked out. “That Edna Ford! You were always crazy about her.”

She made a vicious jab with her fork, and her elaborate sleeve, trailing across the table, overturned the cup of chocolate at her elbow. The accident created a diversion and Vaile hoped that she might forget the subject which his unlucky remark had opened. Otherwise she would work herself up into a hysterical condition, regardless of the absurdity of her jealousy, of the pain which she might inflict upon him, and, incidentally, of the maid's presence.

“Has anyone been here this morning?” he asked, by way of deflecting her attention.

“Only mama and Alicia.”

“Ah! So Alicia has been here. I thought so.”

He blamed himself the next instant for allowing the observation to escape; but the harm was done. Kitty's eyes flashed like hard little sapphires.

“Well, and why shouldn't she have come, I'd like to know? Do you expect my family to stay away from me, just because you hate them? You're away at college all day, or gadding about with your lady-friends; what do you expect me to do? Twiddle my thumbs alone, I suppose! I hate your friends; they're as stupid as—as they

are respectable. And when my own people—the only people I really care about—come to see me, you sneer and jeer. You oughtn't to be so particular about their company; you were glad enough to take their money.”

“Kitty!”

“Yes, ‘Kitty!’” She laughed mockingly. “Oh, you needn't preach at me, and open your eyes wide, and pretend to be shocked. It's true, every word of it. You did marry me for my money, and now you're ashamed of me. You're Theodore Vaile, Assistant Professor of Romance Languages at Ware University, very cultured, you know, and I—I'm only Old Bull Whateley's daughter. ‘The blood will out,’ you say to yourself, and you smile your cynical smile, and think yourself greatly abused. I'll tell you one thing, though: my father may have eaten with his knife, but he made his own money. He didn't wait for a woman to hand it to him and then insult her for not being everything he wanted her to be. He had his faults, but they weren't *that* kind. But you—”

She broke off suddenly, either because she was out of breath or because the command in his eyes had penetrated her excited brain. Twisting her napkin into a rope, she remained silent for a moment; then, with an inarticulate sound, she sprang up and dashed out of the room. In a few seconds her bedroom door closed with a bang that shook the house.

“You may pour my coffee,” said Vaile to the maid; and he looked at that flippant young person in such a way that her incipient grin disappeared. He guessed what his wife's servants said

of him behind his back, but face to face he could control them much better than she. With her they were like ill-behaved children; she did not know how to treat them, and had not the natural dignity that inspires respect.

As he stirred his coffee he viewed the overloaded table with disgust. There was nearly enough silver and cut-glass upon it for a state dinner. It was invariably so with Kitty; whether in matters of the table or in matters of dress the tendency toward display was unconquerable. He could not help thinking of the first and almost the only meal which he had eaten at her father's board. There had been quite a gathering present; the Whateleys, newly stung by the bee of social ambition, had just moved into a mansion on the most fashionable avenue of the town, and were keeping open house for as many "eligibles" as could be induced to enter their portals. They had called attention, naïvely, to the grandeur of the establishment—the number of menials, the expensive table service, the costly pictures and bric-à-brac. The elder sister, Alicia, christened Alice, had been in command. She had a certain crude adaptability, and the dinner would have passed off tolerably well had it not been for the solecism of "Old Bull," who, skewered into evening dress for the occasion, had abruptly indicated his weariness in a sentence containing three examples of the impolite adjective.

After that he had not figured prominently in the family's social attempts. Vaile remembered him without rancor, but also without esteem, for his daughter's description of him, involving the idea of rugged honesty, had been euphemistic, to say the least. "Old Bull" had acquired his fortune in a manner which had only nerve and clumsy force to recommend it. He had not even been skilful; he had simply stuffed the mouth of the law with greenbacks. Yet he had possessed on his personal side a brutal sincerity which was lacking in his women-folk. He had not pretended to be other than he was. His wife and Alicia—yes, and

Kitty—were constantly trying to uphold a false position in ways which made them laughing-stocks. Vaile had hoped, in the old days, that he would be able to separate Kitty from all that sort of thing—that by educating her taste he could teach her the truer uses of money. The Whateley vulgarity, he had thought, might be overcome, and as for the other Whateleys, they could be gradually relegated to the middle distance. The middle distance! He laughed now, remembering the phrase, for the Whateleys, blatant, sly, hysterical, were a part of his life. They were a little afraid of him, indeed, and avoided him as much as possible, but they were continually in and out of the house. He frequently encountered Alicia in the hall on his return from college. She had dropped in for a moment to cheer up Kitty, she would say, and she always looked at him with a defiance the more bitter because her fear compelled her to veil it. Or if he did not actually meet her, he knew when she had been there. After one of her visits the household temperature stood above the safety-point, and the least excitement precipitated a fever which usually culminated in a humiliating outburst like the one which had just occurred. Although he had become accustomed to these scenes, the feeling of shame engendered by them never died; Kitty, despite her ignorance, had the instinctive cleverness to use a potent weapon at the end, no matter how the discussion might start.

For there was a shadow of truth in what she said; the money really had meant much to him. It had meant a period of study in Europe which otherwise would have been beyond his reach. He had been enabled to saturate himself to his heart's content with the atmosphere of ancient French and Italian cities, while Kitty gravitated from shop to shop in a prolonged orgy of buying. It had proved impossible to interest her in things artistic; a cathedral was only "an old church" to her, and the cost of a beautiful painting was its most impressive quality. Paris

had amused her for a time—long enough to allow him to finish his work at the Sorbonne—but she had been almost pathetically glad to get home. . . . Then the years at Ware. He could never have afforded the luxuries so necessary to his temperament if it had not been for the Whateley dollars. His salary would not have hired the house they lived in, or bought a library more valuable, in its special way, than the University collection, or furnished help to so many needy students. He hated the vulgar display of wealth, but he was naturally generous, and to have curtailed his charities would have been as unpleasant as to have lived without his rare editions and pictures. In expenditure he was Kitty's opposite; he liked to purchase what he wanted, without a thought of its cost. He had forgotten, for instance, the exact price paid for his Corot. He had bought it because it appealed to him, and now that it was his he thought only of its beauty. It was fitting that he should be surrounded by these things which he could appreciate so well; the possession of them soothed him and added to his capacity for work. Yet, after all, were they truly his? Were they not rather Old Bull Whateley's?—that detestable old creature who had chewed tobacco all his life and cared for nothing more artistic than a cuspidor! Everybody in Ware knew whence the money had come. Worse still, he himself knew.

He finished his coffee, and looked at his watch; it was not quite time to set out for the afternoon round of recitations. His hand shook a trifle, he noticed, and he did not think the nervousness unnatural. There was to be a meeting of the permanent officers of the faculty that afternoon, to consider the filling of a professorship in his department, and he was a candidate for the position. In fact, he was the logical appointee; he had served a long time as assistant professor, and his work, he had cause to believe, had been satisfactory. He was much more at home in class-room routine than the majority of linguists, and had edited several text-books rather successfully.

But such appointments, unfortunately, were not always made strictly according to merit; the permanent faculty was a large body, divided into many factions, and there was a chance that in the shifting of those factions his name might be lost. Any little misfortune might turn the scale against him—a doubt of his religious orthodoxy, the caprice of an influential member's wife, the hostility of a single man. He had been very careful, laying a close watch upon his utterances, and felt reasonably certain that he had spoken no public word that could be used to his hurt; nevertheless there was a possibility. It would be a pity if he failed to get his promotion, for another vacancy would not occur soon, and he knew the fate of the teacher who stays in one grade too long—how he becomes identified with one narrow set of duties, until at last nobody ever thinks of giving him a broader opportunity.

The hall clock, an atrocious near-antique, chimed the half-hour, warning him that he must go. First, however, he must make an attempt to see Kitty. Poor girl! no doubt she *was* lonely; she had few friends, and her lack of intellectual resources emptied her life of the quieter forms of amusement. If she had been willing—Vaile detested children, but he would have welcomed a wish on his wife's part in that direction. It was the Whateley teaching that stood in the way. From early girlhood Kitty had listened to old wives' tales, and now the word "maternity" on a printed page caused her to shudder. . . .

He knocked at the closed door, but got no answer. After waiting a moment he shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Her spasms generally lasted four or five hours; it was not likely that she would be ready to see him before evening. Yet she would have noticed the omission if he had failed to stop on his way.

The November air was raw and biting, suggestive of the pneumonia which lurked in the damp streets of the old town and carried off an aged professor or two every Winter. He walked

along briskly, pulling up the fur collar of his overcoat around his throat. As he passed the newest building of the Scientific School he smiled grimly. It was of Indiana limestone, and its ornate white front was as incongruous, amid the older structures of dark red brick, as a cloisonné vase in a carpenter-shop. The University was growing rapidly, and there was plenty of money for new buildings, but there seemed to be no definite plan, and handsome edifices were piled helter-skelter in the most inappropriate places, without regard for the character of their neighbors. That was the worst vice of American architecture, he opined, and this building was a particularly glaring instance of it. Occupied by such thoughts, he bumped into a group of students, who, as they belonged to another department of the University, did not know him from Adam and rather resented his presence upon the sidewalk.

His afternoon class-room was in Sturtevant Hall, at the farther end of the Old Campus. It was dark and ill-ventilated, and he looked forward to a better allotment after his promotion. He hoped, also, that he would then be able to hand over his freshman work to an assistant; he did not enjoy the instruction of beginners. This recitation was in French, supposedly of an advanced grade, but in reality very rudimentary indeed—a condition due partly to defective work in the preparatory schools, and partly to the natural dislike of the youthful rank and file for any language not its own. While all the boys had squeezed through an entrance examination in one modern language, most of them had done so under protest, and regarded a continuation of the study as a hardship, to be avoided as soon as the elective system should give them greater freedom in sophomore year. At present they were reading "*Le Gendre de M. Poirier*," with so many halts for grammatical correction that the thread of the play was hopelessly broken. Vaile had tried, aforetime, to arouse interest in the course, but now he made it chiefly

an exercise in discipline. He scorned slipshod teaching, and if he could not call forth any true response from these students, at least he could prevent them from shirking the mechanical task. Secretly, he sympathized with them a little; they were cheerful, barbaric souls, quite frankly hostile after they had discovered that they could not deceive him by flattery, and it was scarcely logical to expect more than a certain minute percentage to prefer French to football.

The second recitation was at the same time less tiresome and less engrossing. The text was Dante, and the class was very much smaller—only seven or eight, in fact. Three were seniors, one was a junior of literary tendencies, and the others, including a lone, lorn female, came from the graduate school. The lady's attendance was annoying to Vaile, not because he disapproved of education for women, but because he thought them out of place in a masculine institution. Today Miss Wendig was even more than ordinarily primed with knowledge, and she had on a queer, round headgear which awoke in him an unkind desire to laugh every time he looked at it. She was really an estimable woman, industrious, ambitious in the face of poverty; but all her virtues paled beneath the pathetic horror of that bright green hat. . . . Owing to the foul air, it had been necessary to leave the door open, and from a class-room down the hall a strong, raucous voice, unpleasant as the clangor of a hydraulic dredge, made itself heard at intervals. He knew that voice; it rasped in the throat of Augustus Faulkner, his especial aversion. Faulkner was holding a recitation in psychology, and his "*Naow, clarss, if I take an or-range*," smote the ear like a savage slogan. The voice communicated something of its owner's heavy self-satisfaction; one felt, irritably, his smug belief in his own omniscience. This belief was the more absurd in view of the fact that Augustus owed his advancement to his marriage; without his wife's clever

lobbying he would have been a non-entity.

"Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante,
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante:
Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse:
Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante."

One of the graduate students was reading, and not even the glib triteness of his rendition could rob the lines of all their beauty. He was an utterly uninspired and equally persistent young man, to whom literature was a matter of syntax and history a list of dates, but Vaile never heard that passage unmoved. "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante." The verse had outlasted the centuries, and would outlast a dozen times as many more. Or if by some mischance it should be lost—if all the books and manuscripts should be engulfed in some unimaginable disaster—then in time new poetry would be written to replace it. That beauty could not die was the really hopeful thing in the world; nothing else was of so much importance. Poets and painters and sculptors, as well as prophets and conquerors, must arise in every civilization. America would have her literature some day, after her industrial mechanism had been perfected, and she had grown a bit weary of the incessant scream of the eagle. As the sword and the ploughshare came before art, so art inevitably followed the ploughshare and sword. There would always be stupid people like the Whateleys, and Faulkner, and Gearin, the graduate student, but they could not do much damage. When all was said they were merely shadows, he thought, since one could forget them so easily in a single verse by the Florentine.

The reading was interrupted by Miss Wendig, who objected to one of the editor's interpretations, as given in a footnote. She had been delving in the library, and adduced several well-known authorities in support of her opinion. She listened to Vaile with a politeness tempered by doubt. The junior, having failed to prepare the as-

signment, took advantage of the discussion to introduce a query anent Silvio Pellico's "Francesca da Rimini." How did it stand from a literary viewpoint, etcetera? This more or less irrelevant matter consumed ten minutes, because Gearin, as the junior was well aware, had looked up Silvio Pellico, and wished to air his information; by that time the hour was finished and the bell rang.

Miss Wendig, still unsatisfied about the footnote, remained for some time, but he got rid of her at last, and started for the library, where he wished to change the books on his reference-shelf. On the steps he met Felix U'Rell, who passed with his usual curt nod. This coldness always hurt Vaile, for U'Rell was one of the few professors whom he greatly admired, and he would have liked his friendship. He did not understand exactly why his overtures were rejected, but felt vaguely that this man's attitude toward him was akin to his own toward Augustus Faulkner. U'Rell was the most independent teacher in Ware—perhaps the only one to whom that adjective could be applied with accuracy. He was openly a skeptic, said what he pleased and did what he chose; yet his work was so fine and original and his honesty so irreproachable, that he managed to hold his place against all attacks. True, his pet schemes were looked upon as jokes, and he would never be promoted to the control of a department; he was a failure according to the world's standards, and his bitter disappointment showed in his face. He had the satisfaction, however, of being shamefully indebted to no one. An unconscionable fool, thought Vaile, and a very brave and brilliant man. Would U'Rell oppose him in faculty meeting? he wondered. Yes, he might oppose him, but he would be just; grim justice was the keynote of the U'Rellian character. There was more to be feared from the conservative element, which often fought a man for no better reason than because it considered the cut of his clothes an evidence of dangerous individuality. Well, it would

all be over in a couple of hours. The meeting was called at four, and by six the matter would be settled. It was strange how a destiny could be decided in a hundred and twenty minutes—the little interval betwixt daylight and dark of a single Autumn day. What a comment on the pitiful casualness of human fate! They were already gathering in Langdon Hall, gossiping about their ambitions and their ailments. Bostwick would tell Leigh of the progress he was making in his new compendium of medieval history, and Leigh, who was both jealous and afraid of Bostwick, would congratulate him heartily. Then President Blair, that able automaton, would rap for order, and the meeting would commence. When they came out he, Vaile, would be either one of them, or a subordinate for life. *Vanitas vanitatum*.

He reorganized his collection of reference books, scolded one of the assistant librarians for permitting another instructor to encroach on his territory, and then buried himself among the dusty volumes in the older section of the building. The library was in the semi-chaotic condition common to all the departments; its recent growth had been too rapid for the working force to handle, and in obscure alcoves were stacked thousands of unlisted books and magazines, awaiting arrangement. Sometimes one found treasures in such a pile.

At ten minutes past six the Campus had begun to assume its nocturnal appearance. The three big arc-lights, strung down the centre, struggled against the gloom with bluish-white rays. Long sections of the quadrangle were dark, but here and there along the faces of the dormitories—Jewett, Muir, Vandegrift—clusters of yellow lights broke the line. Later, when the students returned from dinner at the Commons, these monster cave-dwellings would loom like liners at sea. In the shadow of the McKean Gateway stood the Campus police force—in his own estimation quite the most important University employee.

Vaile passed under the arch and out

upon Flyte street. There were few people on the sidewalks; Ware as a town dined at six sharp. Ahead of him was a solitary pedestrian, walking rather slowly. As he came closer he recognized the short, straight back and broad slouch hat of Johnny Saxon, and involuntarily slackened his pace. He had half-a-mind to cross the street and avoid a meeting. Yet there was no use in that; he might as well know the best—or the worst—at once. Saxon was his friend, and would at least tell him directly. He walked on, drew level and spoke.

Saxon turned with the start of a man who has been sunk in thought. Then, recognizing Vaile, he frowned. So the news was bad! Vaile braced himself.

"They turned me down, I suppose?"

"Yes, old man, they did. Sorry."

"Oh, that's all right," he heard himself say. A moment's silence, then: "Do you mind—?"

"No," said Saxon, "I don't, provided you'll keep it to yourself. It was Whitcomb. He was as vindictive as a wasp, and threw the whole Greek and Latin strength against you. We couldn't budge him. You've stepped on his antediluvian toes, somehow."

"Whitcomb! Why, Johnny, I never spoke fifty words to the old codger in my life. I never— Oh, the devil!" He stopped abruptly. A sudden suspicion had occurred to him—one which he could not trust even to Saxon. "Who got the place?" he asked dully.

"One Jenkinson, a Westerner; you probably know him. I gather that he's entirely harmless. Between the mossbacks and U'Rell, the meeting was pretty stormy. U'Rell doesn't love you, but he said that you were a scholar, while the election of Whitcomb's candidate would be an insult to the intelligence of a child, and he clung as stubbornly to his point as the classical crew to theirs. The only way out of the deadlock was to appoint a neutral man."

"It doesn't matter," Vaile said. "Much obliged for your efforts, Johnny."

The two parted at the corner with a quick handshake, and Vaile went on toward his own door. The flickering gaslight under the maple showed him a tall feminine figure coming out of the gate—Alicia Whateley. He looked at her blackly, and passed without speaking.

The lower part of the house was in darkness; evidently Kitty was still moping, or perhaps, considering this second Whateley visitation, a fresh fit of hysterics would greet him. He registered a vow of patience and went upstairs. The door of her room was shut, but not locked.

She was lying on the bed, much disheveled. Her back was toward him and she did not move at his entrance. He sat down on the edge of the bed and drew her into his arms. She lay limp and passive, but presently her arms went round his neck and she began to cry. That was a good sign; when she wept, her anger usually melted. Her sobs were convulsive, like a child's. He smoothed her hair and waited.

"Tell me!" she begged, her lips against his neck.

"I love you, dear."

"Now tell me that it w-was'n't true, what I said—about your m-m-marrying me for my money!"

"Of course it wasn't true, sweetheart. How could you think it? You know I love you."

"I know; but I like to hear you say it."

Another period of sobbing, less violent than the first.

"Alicia was here, but I sent her away. She said m-mean things about you."

"Never mind, dear. Alicia doesn't

count. I appreciate your loyalty, though."

It seemed a shame to bother her. In this mood, however, she would be more likely to blurt out the truth than when she was on her guard, and there was something which it was necessary for him to know.

"Honey, I met old Whitcomb today," he said. "Do you remember what it was I told you about him one day last month? I was trying to think. Was it that his world lay literally between Alpha and Omega?"

"Yes, that was it." She sat up, suddenly animated. "You know, when I was talking to Percy Beecher at the Blairs' reception, Whitcomb went by, and I told Percy what you said. I didn't think it was so very funny, but he seemed to, and said it was too good to keep, and laughed and laughed and laughed. It made quite a hit with him. I meant to have told you."

She didn't understand—she never would understand, if he could help it. He caught her close to him again, so that she might not see his face. The opportunity was gone; what was the use of harping on it? If he told her, the knowledge would only make her miserable and would not prevent kindred indiscretions in the future. Poor Kitty! She couldn't learn. . . . In fancy he heard the sardonic merriment of Old Bull Whateley, chuckling over the debt. It would never be paid completely, that debt; it bore usurious interest.

Kitty stirred, put up a small hand and stroked his cheek.

"Let me go, you foolish boy," she said brightly. "It must be 'way past dinner-time."



ITS IDENTITY

LITTLE WILLIE—Papa, what does "sensitive" mean?

MR. HENNYPECK—Why, that is the feminine of "quarrelsome," my son.

SUBTILTY TO THE SIMPLE

By John Erskine

CAREFUL youth that he was, Ralph analyzed every important incident in his life—usually after it happened, but sometimes before. When he came to analyze that fateful conversation with Celia he saw beyond doubt that his unexpected sagacity had been conditioned by that book of frivolous maxims on the diplomatic management of womankind. The book had shown, all too convincingly for a philosopher like Ralph, that man is but a weak thing in feminine hands, that her designs upon him are single and direct, but her methods many beyond count and quite unforeseen; and chiefly he took to heart one dark legend of a long-delaying suitor made to declare himself by the timely invention of a rival's name. Ralph had begun the book with a sense of its fun; he laid it down well rewarded in serious ways.

As Celia talked to him that evening in her accustomed happy way, he watched her with grave thoughtfulness, till she wondered whether after all he were only like the other men, who call on a girl just to make an evening pass. He was full of none of his characteristically ardent ways, his logical theories; never once did he develop a shallow remark of hers into a yawning chasm of debate; never once did he compel her butterfly flights of persiflage to take refuge in their original grub of reason. He was quite silent, while she talked on, half angry—and at herself, too, for her unusual failure to rouse him.

If she had but known it, Ralph was analyzing. As she sat before him under a fortunate lamplight that gave the picture the soft sweep and mellowness of a painting, he was analyzing—not the

beautiful head with its blue-black hair, nor the face with its energetic dark eyes and olive tint, nor the white gown, contrasting, as her very name seemed to, with her gipsy coloring and Indian liteness, nor the long silver scarf, draped in simple lines that added height to the tall figure—not these, but in himself a response to them all, an unacquainted stirring of his methodical heart which he strongly suspected was love.

Celia was running out of material; at another time he might have noticed that her monologue was random and thin.

"We've already been to the opera twice this season—Bob's so fond of music," she was saying, "and of course I should have the decency to refuse and let him take someone else; but they say the new German tenor is so fine, and I've *always* wanted to hear 'Die Meistersinger,' so I can't say I'm sorry we're going."

Often as he had met Bob Addington, Ralph had never before disliked him. Now a feeling of unanalyzing hate swept him from his reverie.

"What night did you say?" he asked.

"Friday," she answered, with a quick brightening. "Will you be there?"

In a flash the book of maxims came to his aid, and he knew the meaning of her eagerness. She had mentioned a rival to make him jealous; she would force him out of jealousy to dance attendance at the opera and everywhere else. He saw his fate at a glance—to be an unquestioning servant of those masterful dark eyes. Ralph had

no pride of intellect, but the pride of logic—which is worse—was strong in him; at any moment he would have hesitated to surrender his will, his right to propound, to question, to debate. And just then the maxims were in his blood—he was armed against all feminine guile; long ago he had decided on a plan of defense and rebuke if this very crisis should befall.

"I'm not a great hand for Wagner," he said; "we hear much the same thing every day on the Stock Exchange; and besides"—with exaggerated composure that had all the appearance of bashfulness—"I've more or less set aside that evening for Miss Wylie."

"Miss Wylie?" Celia was certainly interested.

"Yes, Edith Wylie." He hadn't planned the campaign further, so he let his opponent make the next move.

"How long have you known her?" He saw with satisfaction that she was off her guard, according to the book, or she would never be so inquisitive. His own manner recovered firmness—even became jaunty.

"Oh, I can't say *when* I didn't know her."

The dark eyes burned at him silently; then her quiet tone showed that she, too, was recovering poise.

"It's the first time you have ever mentioned her, and I thought you had told me about all your friends."

If Ralph had not been so preoccupied with his *coup*, he might have analyzed on the spot the sudden trouble the words brought him—as if Celia were accusing him of faithlessness—and as if he cared. But just then he was fascinated by the deadly effects of his own strategy. Here was Celia plainly put out by the revelation of his phantom lady; it was comforting to reflect that she, too, might have invented a rival for him, had she not preferred to use that fool Addington.

"Aren't you going to tell me about her even now, Ralph? What a delicious mystery! Of course she's nice—what's she like?"

He couldn't help admiring her assumed gaiety. He thought to himself in the calculated pause before he answered, that she certainly was a true sport, but it was all in the game and he would let her have it.

"She's a pretty nice girl. Don't you know her? She's a small, soft little thing—blue eyes and mighty sweet, guileless sort of face. Not the clinging type, you know, but domestic and old-fashioned—no wonder the fellows swarm round her—she's a rare girl." It sounded a bit vague, he thought; he remembered that it is the special detail that gives verisimilitude, and retouched the portrait somewhat awkwardly: "One side of the mouth dimples in."

From what the book had said, he thought Celia would be most disturbed if her rival were her very opposite, at least in external charms. Clearly he had succeeded again; Celia was strangely interested.

"What did you say her name is?"

"Edith Wylie."

It was Celia's turn to be silent, deep in thought. In spite of her puzzled look Ralph somehow felt his triumph slipping away from him. There was one of those accusing pauses that make you talk in self-defense. Ralph plunged in with fatal adherence to his strategy.

"The fellow that gets her is the luckiest man in town."

Celia caught at the innocent verb. "*Is?* Is she engaged?"

He had not meant to go that far; he retreated instinctively.

"I should have said 'will be.' That sort of girl is sure to marry."

His smooth, cautious manner might have implied anything.

Whatever it implied to Celia, she lost interest in the subject at once, and talked—somewhat commonplacely—about other things. But Ralph was no longer critical. He was analyzing Celia's probable capacity to distinguish between a bit of strategy and a lie, and from some unexpected hiding-place a conviction crept upon him that he had been a fool.

II

IN one sense Ralph kept his word; he did spend that Friday evening with Miss Wylie. But in the same sense he spent it still more with Celia; she and her phantom rival were the constant companions of his thoughts, that night and the four weeks following. He could not fathom Celia's sudden loss of interest, almost coolness, at the end of the disastrous call. Was she really jealous, or did she suspect his fiction and despise him for it, or, worst of all, had she decided then and there to give him up to Miss Wylie? He could see no way to retrieve his folly, nor could he analyze it to his satisfaction. In a general way he had always admired Celia for her frank, cheery manner, for her zest in life, for a certain self-effacement in her interests that he had not found in other girls; indeed, without that hint from the book he would never have suspected her of the most elementary campaigning. Why, at the very moment when he had realized that she was more to him than a friend, had he committed himself to a falsehood which might be fatal if he did confess it, but a source of inestimable discomfort if he did not? When he thought of Celia, the phantom lady stood between them, the clear-cut contrast he had imagined, an impassable screen.

He knew well enough what a call on Celia would involve; she would ask about Miss Wylie, and he must either explain or elaborate the myth. But after four weeks of mental torture he was ready for his fate.

"Yes," came the familiar voice over the telephone, "come this evening—if you are quite sure you want to."

He remembered the hesitation later in the day, when he could see the reason of it. For the time being his guilty conscience supplied reason enough.

"Of course I want to come—that's why I'm asking."

"Well, you haven't asked for quite a while; you needn't feel it a duty, you know." Her voice had recovered its old mirth and he left the telephone

somewhat more trustful that a way could be found to explain.

But that afternoon he knew better. He had stopped at the club for a few minutes, and a group of men in a corner of the library hailed him.

"Heard anything of Addington's engagement, Ralph?"

Ralph could not keep his voice steady. "No! Who's he engaged to?"

"That's the point—the rumor doesn't say, but we hear he's done for, and we thought you might know."

Ralph took a silent place in the group. He wanted to learn more about the rumor, to get any hint that might disprove his fears, but he dared not ask—it would seem too marked. When the talk was irrevocably set in other directions he took himself away, completely miserable.

Two things, of course, were clear. His original suspicion of Celia had been entirely unjust. She was what he had always thought her—impulsive, frank and unstrategic. The maxims were wrong. Or else—and the idea made his folly intolerably bitter—she *had* cared for him, but when the phantom lady had stolen him away, she had taken Addington for consolation. Ralph thought it might be more delicate to omit the call that evening; he could say he had forgotten a previous engagement with Miss Wylie. But he wavered—and went.

Celia seemed happy enough, as he expected, but somewhat constrained—which was natural, too. Conversation was not easy, apparently, for either. He was trying to look at her and not think of Addington—or Miss Wylie, and he found it impossible. It added to his embarrassment that the scene—the room where he had last met Celia—recalled how he had falsely suspected her of designs on *him*. Now he would have cherished the idea.

Celia remembered, too. "Did you enjoy your call on Miss Wylie? I needn't ask—of course you did, and many more since, I'm sure."

"What call?" Ralph had forgotten the answer he had prepared.

"Why, the call you were to make the

night I went to the opera with Bob Addington."

There could be no feminine guile now in the mention of Bob's name, but for other reasons it made Ralph resolve to play the part to the end. The next lie was a simple thing.

"Yes, I enjoyed that call immensely."

"And others since?"

Celia's black eyes were fixed mercifully upon him. Of course, if he had not called several times, the myth would collapse.

"Yes," he said, trying to look proud of it. "I've enjoyed several calls since."

He stopped abruptly, a little staggered by the situation. He was learning prudence from his scars. Celia was evidently determined to go to the bottom of the matter; what if she should ask where Miss Wylie lived? But she did not ask; she watched him thoughtfully for what seemed an unnecessary time, and then leaned forward with a sudden appeal.

"Why don't you tell me all about her, Ralph? I make a splendid confidante—dozens of fellows tell me all about their—affairs."

Ralph could not resist. "Does Bob Addington tell you all about *his*?"

Celia's expression underwent a tell-tale change. She raised her eyes in a troubled way, as if trying to be at ease and in command of herself.

"Don't you think the question a bit impertinent, Ralph? I don't betray confidences. Hadn't you better withdraw it?"

"I'll withdraw it—but I thought you might welcome the chance to answer it in the negative."

Celia looked really dignified now. "I think you had better withdraw it—and I'll withdraw my inquiries about Miss Wylie. I thought I could tease you, Ralph—we are old friends."

The meanness of his position was clear enough, but her behavior at the mention of Addington's name confirmed him in what he thought was the logical course.

"I don't mind telling you about Miss Wylie, Celia—indeed, I've told you al-

ready more than I've told anyone else." Celia's eyebrows rose slightly at the extreme secrecy of the acquaintance, but Ralph did not notice. "She's just an awfully fine girl. I like her, I suppose, because she—well, she just suits me, you know; we fit each other's character."

"Your affinity," suggested Celia with a slight smile. Ralph started to analyze the smile, but gave it up.

"That sort of girl—that type—suits me, somehow. I don't like the frail, clinging type, but that delicate, womanly kind of girl is rare nowadays. They're all so aggressive, don't you think?"

He realized that the question, in the circumstances, was hardly one that Celia could answer; his phantom girl by definition was her very opposite. Celia did not try to answer.

"It's a fine ideal," she said, "and I'm glad you've found her."

He looked up sharply, to see if there *could* be any sarcasm in the words, but before he had decided, she changed the subject.

"Will you let me take you away from her next Wednesday night? Will you go to the cotillon with me?"

He wanted to go, but the invitation puzzled him. It was rather short notice, and why didn't Bob take her? That was it! Bob for some reason *couldn't* take her, and he was an eleventh-hour substitute! The book hinted at things like that. Celia observed his hesitation.

"If you don't *want* to go, Ralph, I'll spare you the embarrassment of declining. I can't compete with Miss Wylie."

"I *do* want to go—Miss Wylie can wait." The book would not have advised such precipitate surrender, but he couldn't let the phantom lady come between them again. It was bad enough to be going to a dance with another man's fiancée.

Celia could not fathom his behavior; he saw that clearly, but she was just as clearly pleased. Ralph went away conscious that she had won in spite of the maxims; he wondered if Bob Ad-

dington had been caught by artificially stimulated jealousy of *him*.

III

DURING the days before the dance Ralph made up his mind to tell Celia the whole thing. He had found no confirmation of the rumor of Bob's engagement, nor the slightest clue to the rumor, but the rumor certainly persisted. His own unwillingness to accept it convinced him that he loved Celia, and he determined to clear himself of Miss Wylie, and to find out if Celia were free.

As they drove to the dance Celia was in one of her gayest moods; he had never seen her so light-hearted. At first the contrast to his own somber misgivings baffled him, but on reflection he saw that it was a good omen, and took courage; she would not be so happy with him if Bob counted for much. By the time they entered the park and reached the quaint house where the dance was to be he was quite sure of himself again, and was planning the different moves by which his apology and his love, without conflicting, were to be laid before her. He was free enough in mind to enjoy the picture as he stood at the foot of the stairs and watched her come down to him, observing how more than usually stately was the tall figure, and how brilliant the dark eyes.

The dark eyes looked past him with a more than usually cordial glance of recognition, and he turned, instinctively, on the defensive—and saw Addington just entering the hall.

He did not stop to question how Addington came there. His first impulse was to resent being made use of, as in some way he felt he had been; the second was to conceal his feelings. But he could not put on much cheerfulness, and Celia's light-hearted manner as they strolled through the rooms hurt him only the more deeply as he realized the cause.

The conviction was strong in him that this evening was critical in his

fate, but how could he tell Celia now about Miss Wylie, the non-existent? And it was most indelicate now to ask Celia about Addington. If only he had—

He stood fixed before a group of late arrivals. In the centre of the group stood Miss Wylie!

After all, she had become so real in his thoughts, he was not so much surprised to meet her—just the girl he had imagined—small, blue-eyed, light-haired, with the peculiar expression of the mouth that had contributed the touch of reality to his make-believe; he recognized her by that. He glanced at Celia, strangely excited, and—he could not analyze the feeling—strangely triumphant. Celia, too, was watching the phantom lady, but she felt his glance and returned it, with a smile that showed she understood. The smile hurt him—it gave him up so easily to this other fate.

It was no half-way fate, however. Before long he was dancing with Miss Wylie, or Miss Brown, as she chose to be called. She was the very dream come true—womanly, as he had described her, but with a spirit that gave her individuality, and with a certain energy of fun that surprised him; he had not so foretold her. By the end of the dance he was a bit reconciled to his fate; indeed, the fiction was irresistible, now that it had come to life.

Celia must have been watching him. "I don't wonder she is your ideal, Ralph," she said, during their next dance. She spoke so naturally that he let the false implication remain; then as before it seemed too late to retract.

The third dance later Celia had with Addington. Ralph saw them on the floor for a few minutes; then they walked toward the little conservatory, too crowded except when the dances were in progress. He tried to attend to what his phantom lady was saying.

"Have you read the new book of maxims—about women?"

It seemed uncanny that *she* should speak of the book that had created her.

"Yes, I've read it," he said. "You evidently have."

"And like it so much! Do you approve of it, as all the men do?"

"It certainly twitches on facts here and there," said Ralph. "But I'm surprised you like it; most of the girls think it's hard on them."

"But it's so clever! Why don't women write such things about men, or about women? Haven't we the brains?"

"Jane Austen had—" began Ralph, but remembered too late that he had missed a gallant opportunity. The phantom lady was looking somewhat depressed, as well-bred people do at the mention of standard authors. But she had no chance to reply; the music stopped—and they were face to face with Addington and Celia, just come from the conservatory.

The happy look on their faces told Ralph the whole story. He was for retreating precipitately, but Celia stopped him.

"I claim the next dance, Ralph—it's leap year, you know." Just what he did with the phantom lady was a matter of research for him afterward. He found himself dancing with Celia, bit-

terly sensitive to her quite apparent joy.

"Let's go into the conservatory, Ralph—I've something to tell you."

"It's coming now," he thought, and gathered his courage. Celia seated herself comfortably, with some attention to the effectiveness of her gown and herself against the flower background; she did look charming. He wondered how she could be so calculating, even when she no longer needed to be.

"I have a secret to tell you, Ralph, a very nice one, that I've told nobody else, but you're such a good friend."

"I thought you never betrayed confidences." He was ashamed of himself almost before the words were spoken.

"I have just received permission to take you into this one."

Ralph felt the logical universe dissolving.

"Mr. Addington is engaged to be married," she continued quite calmly.

"To whom, Celia?"

"To Miss Brown."

She rose with a smile of delicious enjoyment and walked away. For once Ralph did not stop to think; he obeyed an impulse, and followed her.



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WORDS

By Elsa Barker

WHY do our words divide us like a wall,
And only in the stillness, through the eyes
Or the rapt kiss, our spirits in surprise
Rush flaming on each other? When you call
My wraith to you afar, it brings you all
My dumb lips dare not carry. We disguise
The soul with veils of speech—poor soul that tries
To pour the ocean through a pipe so small!

O for the courage to endure the flame
Of God's tremendous silence heart to heart
On the sheer height where weak words are forgot—
Where faith is all the foothold, and the aim
Only to find the soul its counterpart
In the white sphere where space and time are not.



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MADGE—The way she goes on is scandalous.

DOLLY—Yes, dear; but remember the many things she has given us to talk about.



IN the January number of *THE SMART SET* we printed a story entitled "*The Shurtleff Dinners*," signed by "*Frederick Herron*." Our attention has been called to the fact that this story originally appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* for October, 1900, and was written by Charles Warren. We make this announcement in justice to *The Atlantic* and to Mr. Warren.



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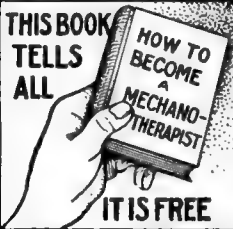
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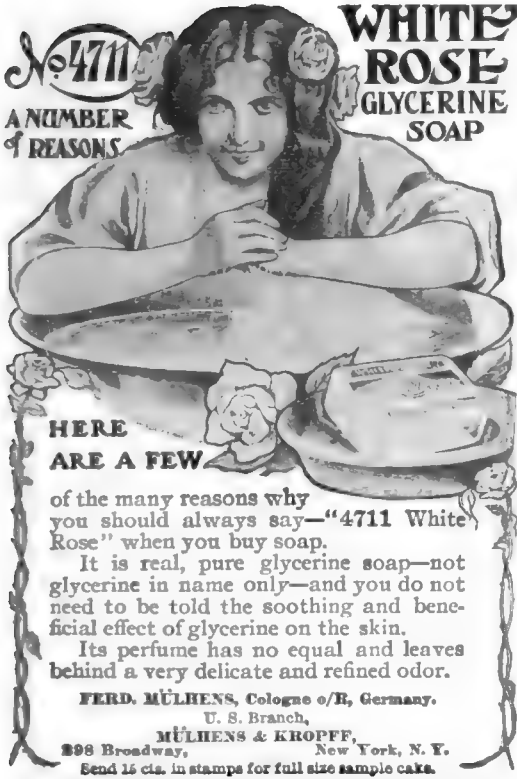
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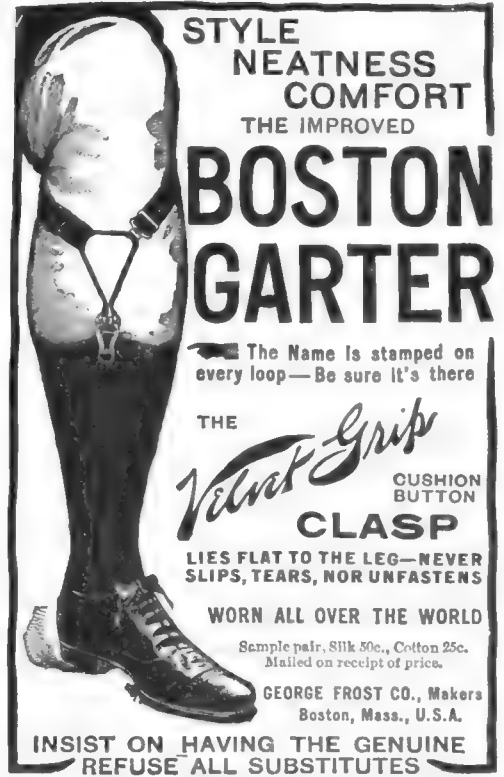
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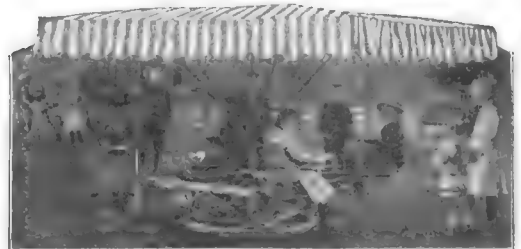
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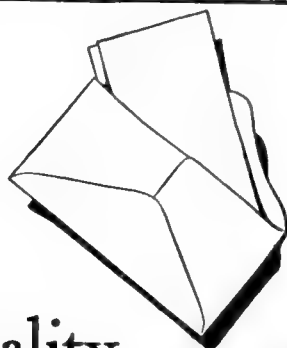
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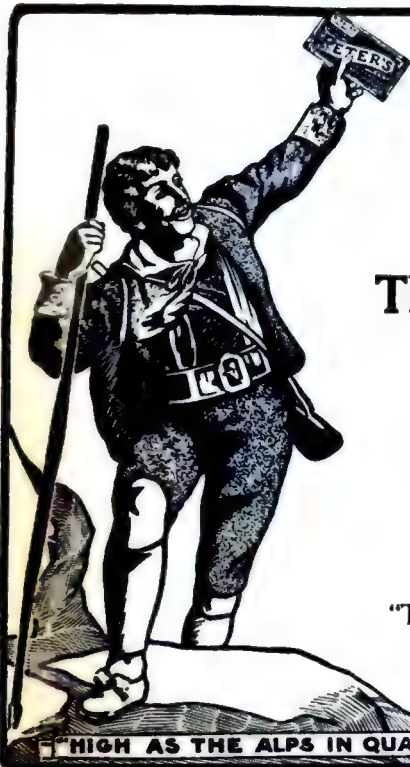


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Irvine K. Mott, M. D., of Cincinnati, Ohio, well and favorably known in that city as a learned physician—a graduate of the Cincinnati Pulte Medical College, and of the London (Eng.) Hospitals, has discovered a remedy to successfully treat Bright's Disease, Diabetes and other kidney troubles, either in their first, intermediate or last stages. Dr. Mott says: "My method arrests the disease, even though it has destroyed most of the kidneys, and preserves intact that portion not yet destroyed. The medicines I use neutralize the poisons that form a



toxine that destroy the cells in the tubes in the kidneys." The Evening Post, one of the leading daily papers of Cincinnati, Ohio, hearing of Dr. Mott's success, asked if he would be willing to give a public test to demonstrate his faith in his treatment and prove its merit by treating five persons suffering from Bright's Disease and Diabetes, free of charge, the Post to select the cases.

Dr. Mott accepted the conditions, and twelve persons were selected. After a most critical chemical analysis and microscopic examination had been made, five out of the twelve were decided upon. These cases were placed under Dr. Mott's care and reports published each week in the Post. In three months all were discharged by Dr. Mott as cured. The persons treated gained their normal weight, strength and appetite and were able to resume their usual work. Anyone desiring to read the details of this public test can obtain copies by sending to Dr. Mott for them.

This public demonstration gave Dr. Mott an international reputation that has brought him into correspondence with people all over the world, and several noted Europeans are numbered among those who have taken his treatment and been cured, as treatment can be administered effectively by mail.

The Doctor will correspond with those who are suffering with Bright's Disease, Diabetes or any kidney trouble whatever, and will be pleased to give his expert opinion free to those who will send him a description of their symptoms. An essay which the Doctor has prepared about kidney trouble and describing his new method of treatment, will also be mailed by him. Correspondence for this purpose should be addressed to IRVINE K. MOTT, M. D., 575 Mitchell Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

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After Facial Massage, Creams and Beauty Doctors Had Failed.

BY HARRIETT META.

Trouble, worry and ill health brought me deep lines and wrinkles. I realized that they not only greatly marred my appearance and made me look much older, but that they would greatly interfere with my success, because a woman's success, either socially or financially, depends very largely on her appearance. The homely woman, with deep lines and furrows in her face, must fight an unequal battle with her younger and better looking sister.

I therefore bought various brands of cold cream and skin foods and massaged my face with most constant regularity, hoping to regain my former appearance. But the wrinkles simply would not go. On the contrary, they seemed to get deeper. Next I went to a beauty specialist, who told me she could easily rid me of my wrinkles. I paid my money and took the treatment. Sometimes I thought they got less, but after spending all the money I could afford for such treatment, I found I still had my wrinkles. So I gave up in despair and concluded I must carry them to my grave. One day a friend of mine who was versed in chemistry made a suggestion, and this gave me a new idea. I immediately went to work making experiments and studying everything I could get hold of on this subject. After several long months of almost numberless trials and discouragements, I finally discovered a process which produced most astounding results on my wrinkles in a single night. I was delighted beyond expression. I tried my treatment again, and, lo and behold! my wrinkles were practically gone. A third treatment—three nights in all—and I had no wrinkles and my face was as smooth as ever. I next offered my treatment to some of my immediate friends, who used it with surprising results, and I have now decided to offer it to the public. Miss Gladys Desmond, of Pittsburg, Pa., writes that it made her wrinkles disappear in one night. Mrs. James Barss, of Central City, S. D., writes as follows: "My face has become fuller, the flesh firmer, and my eyes brighter; all of which is due to your marvelous treatment. The change is so great that it seems to be more a work of magic." I will send further particulars to anyone who is interested, absolutely free of charge. I use no cream, facial massage, face-steaming or so-called skin foods; there is nothing to inject and nothing to injure the skin. It is an entirely new discovery of my own and so simple that you can use it without the knowledge of your most intimate friends. You apply the treatment at night and go to bed. In the morning, lo! the wonderful transformation. People often write me, "It sounds too good to be true." Well, the test will tell. If interested in my discovery, please address Harriett Meta, Suite 143 J, Syracuse, N. Y., and I will send full particulars.

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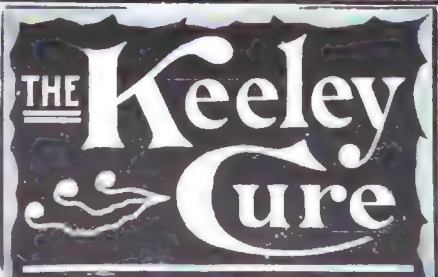
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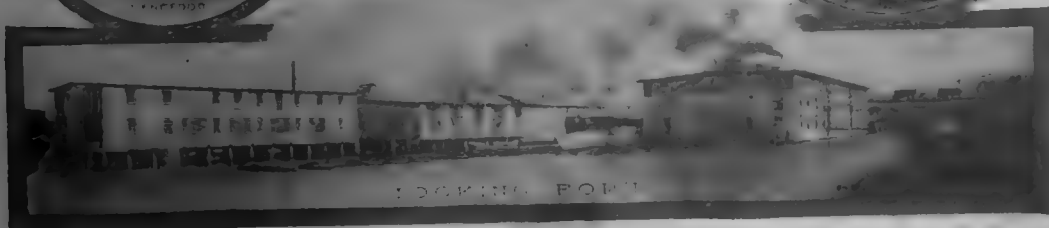
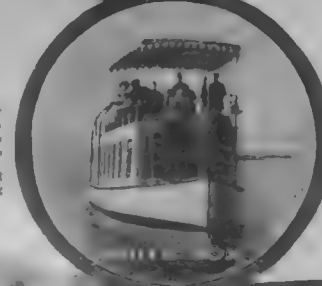
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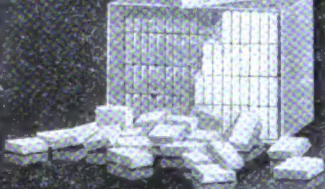
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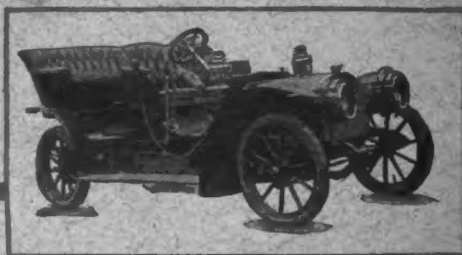
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